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LETTERS OF J. W. GOETHE.

EARLY AND MISCELLANEOUS

LETTERS OF J. W. GOETHE

INCLUDING

LETTERS TO HIS MOTHER.

WITH NOTES AND A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

BY

EDWARD BELL

EDITOR OF 'WILHELM MEISTER'S TRAVELS,' 'SELECT PROSE WORKS OF G. E. LESSING,' ETC.

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PREFACE.

THOUGH Goethe is not commonly reckoned as one of the approved masters of the epistolary art, like Horace Walpole, Madame de Sévigné or Pliny the younger, yet he is probably one of the greatest letter writers that ever lived. Apart from the matter of his letters their number alone is extraordinary, and especially when the voluminous nature of his other literary labours is considered. It has been computed that up to Easter, 1878, about 3900 letters of his had been published, in addition to about 1800 addressed to the Frau von Stein alone, mostly in the years 1776–1788.* The number of his known correspondents is reckoned at about 340, and the range of subjects discussed is no less surprising than the fluency with which he treats them. To Schiller he wrote more than 500 letters, chiefly on the principles of poetry and art; and on the same subjects he corresponded with Schlegel, Bottiger, Riemer. With Merck, Carus, Döbereiner and others, he discussed physical science, and with Jacobi and Lavater subjects of a more metaphysical nature. On plastic art he corresponded with Oeser, Meyer and Sulpiz Boisserée, and on theatrical matters with Rochlitz, Iffland, Kirms and Graf Brühl. Knebel, Zelter and the Duke of Weimar were each the recipients of a large number of letters, and if we take into account the various other series of miscellaneous letters which he must have written at different periods, such as the early letters to Kestner, and the latest of all to Marianne von Willemer, we may reckon that in

* 'Goethe Forschungen' von Freiherr v. Biedermann. Frankf. 1879. See also the recently published catalogue of Goethe's Letters, ed. by F. Strehlke (Hempel, Berlin), in which it is stated that more than 9000 of his letters are known to exist.

the course of his long life he wrote, besides the ordinary business memoranda which were not likely to be preserved, something like 10,000 letters.

Some of the most interesting of these letters were published by himself, and now form part of his collected works; *e.g.* the "Letters from Switzerland" were addressed to the Frau von Stein, and the "Italian Tour" is composed mainly of letters addressed to her and to Herder. His correspondence with Schiller was edited by himself and published in 1828–9; but most of the other series of letters have been issued at intervals between his death and the present time.

When the present volume was projected, many of the earlier letters were practically uncollected, if not unprinted. Otto Jahn had carefully edited the interesting series addressed to Leipsic friends, and the correspondence relating to his residence in Wetzlar had also been collected by Herr Kestner, the son of the lady immortalized in 'Werther.' Schöll too had issued in his 'Briefe und Aufsätze' some of the earliest of Goethe's juvenile effusions, but with the exception of the Leipsic letters translated by Mr. Slater none of these have hitherto been put before English readers. It was therefore proposed to reissue Mr. Slater's translation in combination with an English version of the other two series, and so give in as complete a form as possible a chronological illustration of Goethe's youth from his own early letters.

This project however had scarcely been undertaken, when it appeared that the same idea had already occurred to a German editor; for in 1875 Herr Solomon Hirzel, the well-known publisher and collector of Goethe-literature, issued in three volumes, under the title of 'Der junge Goethe,' a most carefully edited text, not only of his youthful letters arranged in chronological order, but also of the MS. versions of his earliest writings. The scope of the English edition was therefore enlarged, so as to include all the letters given by Hirzel: which extend to the year 1776; and the later publication of the correspondence with Johanna Fahlmer, and of the letters to Mdme. de la Roche included in Fritz Schlosser's 'Nachlass' edited by Frese, which were previously only partly known, has made the present collection even more complete than Herr Hirzel's.

It includes in fact, with a few trifling exceptions, every known letter of Goethe's written during the first twenty-six years of his life. The exceptions are two incomplete drafts published by Schöll, of which the destination is unknown; various notes of a few lines, each containing matter of no importance or interest, several being in part mere memoranda concerning the printing of Lavater's 'Physiognomy,' and lastly sundry passages in the letters addressed to Auguste Stolberg, which in opposition to the received opinion amongst fanatical admirers of Goethe, the editor ventures to regard as being to a great extent worthless for any real biographic purpose.

No doubt a similar objection might be made on the score of triviality to other letters which are not excluded, but the editor must confess that he has indulged a prejudice in favour of completeness, and that in any case he would be unwilling to exclude the smallest note that illustrates the writer's character or circumstances. Moreover, when an arbitrary right of tacit excision is claimed, complete confidence cannot be placed in what is left, and a specific apology in each case for omission is apt to be worse than the crime of commission. It is no disparagement to a great man that he writes to his intimate friends on trivial matters; and if Goethe as a young man makes a request to Fräulein Fahlmer for articles of the toilet, it is no more derogatory than to inform Schiller, many years later, that he is sending him a cod-fish, turnips, or other eatables. The publications of such details may be shocking to the critical scholar, but to the more artistic student they are welcome as giving reality to the picture which, with or without reason, every one likes to make of a great man's life and surroundings; and this is a fact which Goethe himself in his writings is the last to ignore.

But to the letters addressed to Auguste Stolberg such considerations do not apply. The supposition that Goethe was violently in love with a girl that he had never seen is quite out of accord with his practical sense, and the healthy realism of his character and emotions; and when an ardent, impulsive young lady, of twenty-one, writes effusively to him, we must not assign any serious meaning to answers which in the heyday of Wertherism, and in the

first flush of renown, and of a sudden and unbounded popularity, he thought it proper to indite. Many passages seem as artificial in feeling as they are absurd in expression. They were manifestly meant to be seen by no one besides his sentimental correspondent, and it is due as much to common sense as to loyal feeling to curtail these illustrations of a phase of mind which is amply exhibited in what is left. It may seem unnecessary to say even thus much on a matter which is of little importance one way or the other, for after all the letters have no harm in them, but when we find German editors enthusiastic over what English critics call rubbish, it is due to the reader to attempt some explanation of a middle course which, whilst it will please neither extreme will probably satisfy the intelligence of English readers who wish to know what Goethe was really like.

Herr Hirzel's work deserves commendation for the scrupulous fidelity with which he has endeavoured to reproduce the various documents printed by him. To furnish explanatory notes was altogether beyond the scope of his design, but their absence is not compensated for by the introduction given under the name of Dr. Bernays. An attempt has been made to supply the deficiency to some extent in this translation, but obviously there are many allusions which cannot be explained, and on the other hand considerations of space have precluded a good deal of annotation which might have been interesting. Had it been known that Dr. Düntzer was about to publish a new chronological record of Goethe's life, based on precisely such evidence as the documents afford, with all the elucidation which previous labours and a long and indefatigable study of the subject enable him to supply; and that the work was so soon to appear, as it already has done, in an English form,* there would have been less occasion either for annotation or even for the letters themselves. But as the greater part of the collection was already in type, the original design has been carried out with some additional advantage in the form of notes derived from Dr. Düntzer's work.

* Trans. by Thomas W. Lyster, assist. Librarian Nat. Library of Ireland. 2 vols., 1883 (Macmillan).

Two of the short series of letters at the end of the volume are given because they both illustrate isolated and widely different phases of his character, which, interesting as they are, are somewhat lost in the abundance of material with which his biographers have to deal. The letters to his mother are with one exception found in Keil's volume 'Frau Rath,' in which she forms the central figure, but though they are so few they do not fail to indicate the equal terms of intellectual regard as well as affection on which he stood towards the parent from whom his more brilliant qualities were derived. Those to his unknown correspondent, "Kraft," are given in Schöll's 'Briefe u. Aufsätze,' and readers who appreciate the high significance which Mr. Lewes has assigned to this episode in Goethe's life will be glad to see the evidence of qualities to which other biographers have remained singularly indifferent. The two letters to Riese are given, because one at least forms an interesting supplement to the three early letters which have so much value for the biographer, and because they are at present only to be found in a privately printed pamphlet which is not very accessible to general readers even in Germany.

The short biography prefixed to the volume is little more than an abstract of the autobiographic 'Dichtung u. Wahrheit' designed to supply a thread on which the following letters may be strung; though it will be evident that the writer has also been greatly indebted to Mr. Lewes's 'Life,' which, in spite of the work of later investigators, still remains the best critical biography of Goethe either in Germany or England.

The editor has to thank Mr. Slater for his translation of the Leipsic letters, which, however, has been revised throughout with a view to more literal exactness, and Mrs. E. Fielding and Mr. A. H. Gunlögsen for assistance in other portions of the translation. The following are the principal works from which the material of the volume has been derived.*

* Since this was commenced a very similar volume has been published in Germany: 'Jugendbriefe Goethes: ausgewählt und erläutert von Dr. Wilhelm Fielitz.' Berlin, 1880.

Schöll	Briefe und Aufsätze.
Otto Jahn . . .	Goethe's Briefe an Leipziger Freunde (second ed., 1867).
A. Kestner . . .	Goethe und Werther, 1854.
Karl Wagner . . .	Briefe an J. H. Merck, 1835.
J. Frese	Goethe Briefe aus Fritz Schlosser's Nachlass, 1877.
L. Uhlich . . .	Briefe von Goethe an Johanna Fahlmer, 1873.
R. Keil	Frau Rath: Briefw. von Keth. Eliz. Goethe, 1871.
S. Hirzel	Der junge Goethe. Seine Briefe und Dichtungen von 1764–1776. Mit einer Einleitung von Michael Bernays, 1875.
Düntzer	Goethes Leben.
G. H. Lewes . . .	Life of Goethe, 2nd ed., 1864.
Goethe's Autobiography .	Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit.

These books are for the most part cited in the notes by the editors' names.

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A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

OF

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE.

SECTION I.—*Birth and Childhood.* 1749–1765.

THE city of Frankfort-on-the-Maine ranks as the first of those which, until the middle of the present century, retained peculiar privileges as free or independent cities of the Holy Roman Empire. Whilst all of them, as centres of industry and commerce, could lay claim to political importance, Frankfort enjoyed the precedence and historical prestige attached to the scene of the great imperial pageants, the crowning of the emperors or Roman kings.* Its citizens, for the most part traders or wealthy merchants, were duly conscious of this pre-eminence; and though in other respects they had little converse with or care for hereditary rank and titles, the sense of their privileges, coupled with the independence nourished by a free municipal administration, created a sentiment of civic nobility, so to speak, such as may always be found in some measure in a prosperous community not overshadowed by feudal prerogative or aristocratic pretension.

In Frankfort, nevertheless, there were class-divisions, irrespective of the Jews, who inhabited their own quarter (the Judengasse) and took no part in the government of the city. The richest merchants were men who, with wide

* The imperial crown could strictly only be received at Rome. But the crown of the subordinate dignity of "King of the Romans" was conferred at Frankfort (formerly at Aix-la-Chapelle); and the emperors of modern times dispensed with the imperial coronation. Sometimes the emperor caused his successor to be elected and crowned during his own lifetime, and the coronation of Joseph II. as Roman king, which will be referred to afterwards, took place under these circumstances.

connexions in other cities of Europe, were less exclusively attached to the spot on which they lived. The true Frankfort burgher was he who derived his wealth from his native town and seldom went beyond it. Well-to-do, but not ostentatious, his ambition aimed at the civic offices which presented the most readily recognised aspects of influence and power. There were many subordinate duties open to such a man, through which he might, if prosperous, attain even the position of *Oberbürgermeister* of the city. If qualified as a lawyer he might aspire to the dignity of *Schöffe* or magistrate, or the still higher office of imperial magistrate or *Schultheiss*, who presided over the full court of *Schöffen*, and was second to none amongst the permanent functionaries of the free city.

To this burgher-class belonged by birth the poet Goethe on both his father's side and his mother's. His paternal grandfather, Friedrich Georg Goethe, was the son of a farrier of Artern in Thuringia: he settled in Frankfort as a tailor, and on marrying a second time, he became the landlord of the inn *Zum Weidenhof*, and in due course the father of two sons. The elder did not long survive him; the other, Johann Kaspar, having received a good education and spent some short period in foreign travel, settled down in Frankfort with a competent fortune. For the sake of having some employment he applied for one of the minor civic offices, in the hope that it would be conferred on him without the customary balloting; but being unsuccessful in this, he withdrew in ill-humour, and having procured from the imperial government the honorary rank of *Rath*, or councillor, thereby rendered himself ineligible for any subordinate office. At the age of thirty-eight he married Katharina Elizabeth, daughter of Johann Wolfgang Textor, chief magistrate and imperial councillor, and by her became the father of the greatest of German poets.

The family of Textor, though of older established wealth, was not more aristocratic than that of Goethe. It was originally called Weber (i.e. "weaver;" doubtless the handicraft of some ancestor), but according to a custom prevalent in the 17th century, it was latinized by one Wolfgang Weber, councillor, of Hohenlohe. His son removed to Frankfort, where he became Oberbürgermeister, and left descendants

who continued to uphold the credit of the family. It was his great-granddaughter who married Rath Goethe.

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE, the eldest of their children, was born at Frankfort, on the 28th of August, 1749. His life, which for the first few minutes flickered doubtfully, may have been saved, as he suggests with mild irony, by the favourable conjunction of the heavenly bodies which amateurs in astrology afterwards noted, and interpreted as of good omen. Be this as it may, the doubt was not of long duration, and he grew up a robust child. Sixteen months later a daughter also was born, who was christened Cornelie Friederike Christiane. She was destined to a more than usually close companionship with her brother, for of the other four children who appeared in succession, one barely completed his sixth year, and the others died in infancy.

In this family there was one other member of whom mention must be made, namely, the mother of Rath Goethe, in whose house in fact they lived. Though between eighty and ninety years old, she took a lively interest in her grandchildren, and devised means of gratifying them constantly. One device, a puppet-show which she had exhibited to them at Christmas, and afterwards gave to them, is worth noticing on account of the deep impression which it made upon the boy.*

Her house was situated in the street called the Hirschgraben. It is described as an old and rambling dwelling, formed by the union of two adjoining houses. After his mother's death, which occurred in 1754, Rath Goethe considered it advisable to have it rebuilt; and this house, as then altered, still stands unimpaired, and testifies to the respectability and solid tastes of the worthy councillor.

Of the character of Rath Goethe we derive a very distinct idea from the many allusions in the 'Autobiography' of his son.

No one is more likely to be a burden to his immediate associates, than a man with strong business instincts, and nothing on which to exercise them. Rath Goethe having been denied any fitting occupation amongst his fellows, made

* It was, no doubt, as Mr. Lewes points out, the origin of the puppet-show described in an early chapter of 'Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.'

a business out of his domestic life, and was wont to introduce into all that went on an amount of detail, preciseness, and method that afforded more discipline than pleasure to his wife and family. But while severe, exacting, and obstinate in the carrying out of his ideas, he had still a keen appreciation of the advantages of culture and a liberal education.

The tour in Italy which he had made in his youth, provided a theme on which for years afterwards he was prone to dilate both in writing and speech. It had imbued him with a sense of the importance of the arts and language of that country, and also had incidentally given him an opportunity of collecting a series of engravings which now decorated the walls of his rooms. That these tastes were pursued with pedantry, and at the expense of his family, was unavoidable in such a character; and we cannot but sympathize with his young wife when, during the first years of their marriage, he kept her, like a schoolmaster, busily writing, playing the clavichord, or singing Italian songs; or with his children afterwards when he made them devote days to the tedious task of cleaning his engravings in an attic. At another time he made them, much to their disgust, feed and tend thousands of silkworms, which he had procured with a view to the promotion of silk-culture in Frankfort.

Between him and his wife there was a disparity in more ways than one. Not only was she twenty-one years the younger, having been married at the age of seventeen, but also her temperament was altogether different. Imaginative and lively, she was more the companion of her children than of her husband, and in later years it gave her pleasure to think that she and her Wolfgang had been young together. At the same time she was no commonplace woman; a quiet natural intelligence, combined with a genial kindly disposition, formed a character which in later life became well appreciated by a wide circle of friends and correspondents.

Of Goethe's childhood many details are given in the 'Autobiography,' told in an interesting if somewhat rambling fashion. It records one childish freak, which indicates more clearly than in any later part of the book the careless high spirits which formed a strongly marked characteristic

of his youth. It relates to a period before the rebuilding of the house, when he was probably four years old. The house, in common with many others in Frankfort, was built with an open ground-floor chamber, or porch, called a *Geräms*, separated from the street only by a lattice-work frame. This place was used in fine weather as a common room, in which the women of the family sat and knitted, or the cook prepared her vegetables; so that in the summer the street had something the aspect of a southern town. In this room Wolfgang was one day playing alone with some small articles of earthenware, which had been bought for the children at a crockery-fair. When tired of his amusement, he threw one of the toys out of the lattice, and was delighted with the crash it made in breaking on the pavement. This was observed by some young men who lived opposite, and who were accustomed to amuse themselves with his childish pranks. They called out "More!" and presently pots, plates, pipkins, and mugs, were thrown out one after the other, to the mutual satisfaction of the performer and his spectators. When all his small ware was exhausted, the child ran to the kitchen, which had been newly furnished with crockery, and before long every plate and dish on which he could lay hands was devoted to condign destruction. By the time that some one came to the rescue, most of the earthenware of the establishment lay in fragments in the street.

The rebuilding of the house was to the children a remarkable event: the little boy officiated at the laying of the foundation-stone, in the costume of a mason. It suited his father to carry out his plan in a piece-meal fashion, so that the family continued to occupy the dwelling, which was gradually transformed about them. At last the roof was removed, and the rain penetrating to their bed-rooms forced the father to entrust his children to some friends; and at the same time the little boy was sent to school in the town. It appears, however, that he did not remain there long. The roughness and vulgarity that characterised a German public school or *Gymnasium* of that period were ill-suited to a child that had been brought up in a refined and strict manner. It was found better that he should take private lessons with other children of their acquaint-

ance, who formed classes attended by the teacher at one or another of their houses, by which he had the advantage of associating with other children, without the worst evils of a school. The father at the same time took an active part in the education of both Wolfgang and Cornelie. He had no ordinary ground to work upon. His son's precocity was in the highest degree remarkable, and prevented his deriving advantage from lessons shared with ordinary children. In the eighth year he wrote Latin with ease; at the same time he had made good progress in Greek, and also in French. He picked up Italian through hearing his father teaching Cornelie. His German compositions show that he had already begun to think independently. It is true that his knowledge was inexact, and that he had, and always retained, an aversion to grammar; but a ready and retentive memory went far towards making him independent of the drudgery of learning. At a very early age he showed an aptitude for verse-making; and also became aware of his superiority over other boys in this respect. And whilst his father cultivated his intellectual and receptive faculties, his mother with less formality and method kept his imagination in active growth. She had a talent for improvising allegories and fairy tales, which she had as much delight in telling as the children in hearing. Little Wolfgang would sit and listen with rapt attention; and often, as the story proceeded, would suggest by his impetuous sympathy the turn which it was to take.*

It will not be surprising that he began to reason on religious subjects at a very early age. The event which, as he expresses it, first disturbed his peace of mind was one which filled Europe with consternation, namely, the great earthquake of Lisbon, which occurred on the 1st of November, 1755. The details of the catastrophe as they gradually became known affected his feelings powerfully, and raised doubts as to whether the Deity, in consigning both the just and the unjust to the same destruction, had acted in a benignant and fatherly manner. But this was not for long: that mankind was at the mercy of an unjust and arbitrary supreme Power was not a creed which could take hold of his mind, and, as his whole life proves, was opposed to

* See quotation in Lewes, 2nd ed. p. 14.

his healthy instincts. That religious questions, however, were approached by him in an original manner is shown by another incident. The recognised or established form of worship in Frankfort was Lutheran, but sectarianism largely prevailed, and various communities, known as Separatists, Pietists, *Herrnhüter* (Moravians), *Stillen im Lande* (Quiet in the Land), existed, all of whom, he observed, "had simply the design of approaching the Deity, especially through Christ, more nearly than seemed to be possible under the form of the established religion." Those forms which showed the greatest simplicity and independence attracted him the most, and "he came to the thought that he might immediately approach the great God of nature, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, whose earlier manifestations of wrath had long been forgotten in the beauty of the world and the manifold blessings which we share therein." With this object he adopted the following strange expedient. He had to erect an altar to the supreme Deity, for which purpose he used an old music-stand of his father's, on which he arranged a collection of minerals and other natural productions, such as he considered the most fitting emblems of that external nature whose Author he desired to honour. For the sacrificial flame he could devise nothing better than a pastile, which he placed on the apex of the stand. As soon as the sun, appearing above the housetops, shone into his room, he held a burning glass to the pastile, and so through the most direct agency of nature he made his burnt-offering to the Creator of nature. In this curious scene, if the account penned in after-years is to be relied on, there is an amount of method and consistency which distinguishes it from ordinary child's-play; but at the same time it is not to be forgotten, in estimating its significance, how young a child he was. That it was enacted under the influence of the early Biblical history, which has so much attraction for all children, cannot be doubted; and later passages in his 'Autobiography' prove how much more vividly than usual the whole Mosaic narrative had impressed him.*

A similar influence, and one which was shared by thousands of his fellow-countrymen, was exerted by Klopstock's

* See 'Autobiography,' (trans.), vol. i. pp. 104–114.

'Messiah.' This poem, published in 1747, had aroused enthusiasm in other countries besides Germany, notably in Switzerland and Denmark. Powerful imagery in combination with the familiar Bible story was well calculated to appeal to the masses; and as it was the first genuinely German work which did so, it is regarded as the starting point of their modern literature. But to a formalist like Rath Goethe it did not recommend itself, chiefly because it was not written in rhymed verse; and it was only by the connivance of an old family friend, Rath Schneider, that they were able to procure the book, and read it furtively, until their occupation was discovered and interdicted by their father.

But in the next year, 1756, when Wolfgang had just completed his seventh year, another world-stirring occurrence brought his thoughts back to mundane affairs. Frederick II., the young but already famous king of Prussia, suddenly marched an army into Saxony, and commenced the rash but ultimately successful series of campaigns known to history as the Seven Years' War. This contest, as it divided the powers of Germany and of Europe at large, so did not fail to bring contention into many families hitherto closely united; of which those of Goethe and Textor furnished an instance. The old magistrate and his wife were amongst the most familiar figures of Wolfgang's childhood. They lived in a capacious but irregularly built dwelling in Niedberg Street, behind which lay a garden of great extent. To this garden the old man devoted great attention, and thither the children would run on summer evenings, and enjoy themselves with a sense of liberty to which the discipline of their home gave all the more keenness. Wolfgang, as the eldest grandson and also the godchild of the Schultheiss, was especially favoured. The story of 'The New Paris' gives a graphic glimpse of him at this period; and it is not difficult to picture him on Sunday morning, dressed according to the fashion of the time, in green coat with brass buttons, knee-breeches, and shoes with silver buckles, going as soon as service was over to his grandfather's house, where he had always been accustomed to take his Sunday dinner.

But it was on these pleasant relations that political events

cast a shadow. Schultheiss Textor, who had officiated at the coronation of the emperor Francis I., the husband of Maria Theresa, sympathized completely with the enemies of Prussia. Rath Goethe, on the other hand, had received his title of imperial councillor from the preceding emperor, Charles VII. (Elector of Bavaria) who had suffered at the hands of the Austrians; and from this cause, as well as from personal admiration for the king of Prussia, his sympathies were all with Frederick.

The worthy councillor was not a man to conceal or suppress his feelings: hence disputes, coolness, and ultimately separation, ensued. Wolfgang enthusiastically adopted his father's opinions, and thus the Sunday visits, at which he was compelled to hear the most horrible slanders of his hero, became distasteful to him, whilst his liking, and even his respect for his grandparents, were diminished. To these contentions he attributed later in life a bad effect, since they taught him to distrust what he had heretofore reverenced, and caused a certain disdain for the opinion of others which clung to him for a long period.

At the end of the year 1758 the war assumed a phase more personally interesting to the inhabitants of Frankfort, by the intervention of the French in favour of Austria; in consequence of which many French troops passed through or near to the city. The excitement thus caused reached a climax on the 2nd of January, 1759, when large bodies of troops entered the city, and taking possession of the guard-house, manifested the intention of remaining. The citizens were called upon to quarter the soldiers in their houses, the accommodation being apportioned in accordance with the rank of the soldiery. Rath Goethe being a person of some consideration, with a good house, received as a lodger the "King's Lieutenant," a certain Count Thorane. In this respect he was fortunate, inasmuch as this officer was a man of some culture and refinement. Though, as it appeared, he was rigid and stern in his official capacity, whilst in temperament he was serious and melancholy or satiric and humorous by turns, he was uniformly considerate and attentive to the convenience of the family, not only in the arrangement of the rooms allotted to him, but also in his daily manner of living. His pre-

sence was necessarily a source of great disturbance, for his particular office required him to be accessible at all hours of the day and night to subordinate officers in reference to the discipline of the garrison. From the first Rath Goethe conceived a prejudice against him as representing a cause hostile to that which he had at heart, and allowed it to be overcome neither by the determined politeness of the Count nor by the interest which he showed in matters of art. The walls of one of the rooms were decorated with numerous oil-paintings, which had been executed for Rath Goethe by living artists. When Count Thorane heard that these artists were for the most part to be found in Frankfort and the neighbourhood, he desired to be made personally acquainted with them, and gave orders for a number of paintings, which were forthwith executed under his own supervision, and despatched to his home in France.

The intercourse with these artists, and the inspection of their work, much of which was done in a small room set apart for it in the house, was exceedingly interesting to Wolfgang, who from this time acquired an enthusiasm for art which was of material effect in his after-life.

The presence of a foreign garrison added to his general experience in other ways. French soldiers were necessarily followed by a French theatre: a concert-hall was metamorphosed into a play-house, on the stage of which Racine's and Molière's master-pieces, as well as works of less renown, were acted in their native tongue.

Wolfgang had the use of the free ticket which had been alloted to Schultheiss Textor; and in spite of objections on the part of his father, in which however his mother did not share, he constantly availed himself of it. He soon found himself able to understand the language, in which he had already had instruction; and the rapid progress which he made overcame his father's objections. At the same time his knowledge of the world received somewhat premature augmentation. When playing with other children in the corridors between the acts, or when the piece did not please him, he was attracted by the appearance of a handsome boy of good manners, who often joined them, and who turned out to be connected with the actors. "He was," says the 'Autobiography,' "a most engaging little braggart;

he chattered charmingly and incessantly, and could relate so much about his adventures, affairs, and other peculiarities, that he amused me uncommonly; and so far as concerns language, and communication by means of it, I learnt in four weeks more from him than could have been imagined, so that no one knew how it was that all at once, as if by inspiration, I had acquired the foreign tongue." This youth, whom he styles Derones, was apt to introduce the dramatic element into ordinary life: and one day, after some childish amusement, he insisted that Goethe had insulted him, and must give him satisfaction forthwith. The children being dressed in their best, wore each a small sword after the fashion of the time. Retiring to a secluded spot, they drew, and exchanged thrusts, until the point of Derones' weapon having become fixed in his adversary's sword-knot, he declared himself fully satisfied, whereupon the duellists adjourned to a café, and cemented their reconciliation with glasses of almond milk.

With this friend Goethe also gained admission behind the scenes, where the unembarrassed manners and conduct of the actors and actresses at first caused him some surprise, though in time it seemed to him "quite natural."

After having witnessed almost the whole range of the French drama, he became ambitious to attempt a dramatic composition himself. He accordingly wrote a small piece, a mixture of allegory and mythology, with kings' daughters, princes, and gods as characters, after the model of some which had especially pleased him. This piece he submitted to the judgment of Derones; but the critic, although he condescended to give it a general approval, suggested so many alterations, and enlarged so dogmatically on the three unities and other conventionalities, in respect to which he vaunted the superiority of the French dramatists, that the young author withdrew his attempt in despair. The incident, however, was not fruitless. It led him to seek information on the alleged dramatic requirements, and, finding no firm ground in theory, to think for himself, and thereby contributed to that freedom of treatment through which he afterwards helped to found a German drama.

The French garrison left Frankfort in June 1761, after a stay of two years and a half. The King's Lieutenant

had left Goethe's house a short time before, partly in consequence of a quarrel with his host; and by special favour Rath Goethe obtained relief from further billeting by taking as private lodgers a small family already known to him. The change restored the peace of the household, and enabled the worthy councillor again to give his attention to his children.

Wolfgang at this time was nearly twelve years old. He devoted himself with versatile energy to various new pursuits. He took lessons for an hour a day in drawing. With his sister he began to learn the harpsichord. An English master was also engaged, from whom the father himself took lessons with his children. Wolfgang adopted an ingenious expedient for keeping up his knowledge of various languages. He invented a story the characters in which were several members of one family, scattered about in various parts of the world, who communicated with each other in various styles and languages. The eldest brother describes a journey in good German. A sister writes to him and the others in a style supposed to be characteristic of feminine authorship. A second brother is studying theology, and writes in Latin, with an occasional postscript in Greek. Two others being clerks in merchants' houses at Hamburg and Marseilles make use respectively of English and French. A fifth, a young musician travelling for the first time, adopts Italian; whilst the youngest brother, being forestalled in the purer tongues, is obliged to content himself with Jew-German, whereby the other characters are driven to despair; and the whole affair is made very amusing to young Goethe's parents.

His investigations in Jew-German, the hybrid dialect of the Jews' quarter in Frankfort, turned his attention to Hebrew, and he begged his father to let him learn it. The assistance of Dr. Albrecht, the rector of the gymnasium or high-school, was obtained, and under his tuition, he made some little progress in reading the Old Testament. The business, however, turned out more formidable than either he or his father had anticipated. His eagerness to bring out and comment on the text, outstripped his progress through the grammatical difficulties, which he never over-

came. Nevertheless the experiment had some effect in giving him an exceptional appreciation of the Scriptures, as is set forth in the lucid paraphrase of Mosaic history given in the 'Autobiography.' Klopstock had helped to give him a tender and almost romantic conception of the personages of the Old as well as the New Testament, and his imaginative faculties, attracted by the character which is the favourite of all children, found expression in a 'History of Joseph,' a sort of poetical-prose epic of considerable length, in which he felt some pride. It was written down for him by his father's amanuensis, a half-witted young man whom Rath Goethe kept in his house, partly from charity and partly to assist him in business. The whole was dictated to this copyist, and after the addition of sundry stray poems, already composed, the sheets were neatly bound; after which the volume, lettered 'Vermischte Gedichte' (Miscellaneous Poems), was presented to and received by his father, with satisfaction on both sides. This was Wolfgang's first work, not destined to the immortality of print: yet it is noticeable as showing the early age at which he commenced the habit of dictation, constantly adopted in his later years—an evidence of the ready flow of his ideas and of his natural command of language.

Industrious as he was in this desultory way, his habits were by no means studious. He took a lively interest in all that came under his observation, and eagerly picked up all sorts of miscellaneous information. He made friends with an artist named Nothnagel, whose special vocation was the application of art in the manufacture of ornamental oil-cloth. Wolfgang used to visit him at his factory, and watch the process with much interest, going about amongst the workpeople, and occasionally lending a helping hand. He also made friends with a jeweller whom his father employed, and from whom he learnt the names of precious stones and their comparative values. His avidity for all sorts of knowledge gave him unusual pleasure in the society of his elders; and amongst his early friends he enumerates many of the Frankfort characters of his day of various social grades.

In his fifteenth year Goethe, with the precocity which

distinguished him in all things, fell in love. The object of this early sentiment was a girl beneath him in station, but, if his own account is to be accepted, of good manners and attractive appearance. Through a former schoolfellow he became acquainted with a set of youths belonging to the lower middle-class, who seemed to rely on the indefinite and precarious mode of existence known as "living by their wits." They naturally treated the son of the rich burgher with deference, and flattered his self-esteem by admiring and turning to account his aptitude for verse-writing. One day, having accompanied some of these youths home, he saw, and forthwith fell in love with, Gretchen, by which name only is the fair one indicated. She captivated him still more by giving him some sensible advice in respect to a foolish practical joke in which his friends desired his co-operation: and unknown to his parents, he took every opportunity of seeing her.*

About the same time (1763) the approach of an important political event was engaging the attention of the inhabitants of Frankfort. One of the stipulations of the peace of Hubertsburg, which terminated the Seven Years' War, was the condition that the Archduke Joseph, son of the Emperor Francis I., should be recognised as Heir to the Empire and King of the Romans. The formal election was to take place at Frankfort, and the preparations for this event, and for the coronation which would immediately follow, were now taxing the energies of the citizens.

Rath Goethe, though he had no official position, was not the man to let such an event approach without special preparation. He therefore desired his son to read through with him the journals relating to the last two elections, in order that any new circumstances and conditions incident to the present occasion might be duly noted. We may well believe that the boy did not find this a very cheerful task, and that the image of Gretchen, as he declares, hovered here and there amongst the most august objects of the Holy Roman Empire. Nevertheless it was diligently performed, and he gained the advantage of knowing more than most people about the ceremonies that ensued.

* She was probably the original of Margrete in 'Faust.'

The city became filled with visitors. As in the days of the French occupation, officials of distinction were quartered in the house in the Hirschgraben. Wolfgang spent more time away from home than ever, and amidst crowds of other sightseers wandered with Gretchen about the streets looking at all that went on. The retinues of the several electors, and of the ministers or ambassadors of reigning sovereigns, the preparations made for their reception, the gorgeous procession which signalled the entrance of the emperor, and his son the king-elect, with all the pomp of heraldry, the endless display, and the cumbrous ceremony which still characterised the imperial court, were duly stared at by both, and gave the youth many an opportunity of exhibiting his learning and proving his devotion at the same time.*

The festivities, however, were not ended before these pleasant relations came to an abrupt and dolorous conclusion. One morning he suddenly learnt that some of his recent associates were accused of forgery, and that his connexion with them was known, and interpreted to his disadvantage. Though conscious of his own innocence, and certain of Gretchen's, his feelings were violently affected by the suspicion thrown on him, and he fell into a state of mind which resulted in a serious illness. It was only after his recovery that he learnt that Gretchen and his more immediate friends had, after examination, been acquitted of complicity in the matter, and that the former had left the city. At the same time he was mortified to hear that she had explained her relations with him by saying that she had treated him as a child, and had felt towards him as a sister. Injured vanity and separation (for he never saw her again) effectually extinguished his love, though it was some time before he recovered his ordinary health and high spirits.

After this affair he was placed in charge of a special superintendent or tutor, a young man of good abilities and education, who, having a taste for philosophy, endeavoured to turn his pupil's mind in the same direction.

* The account of the election ceremonies given in the 'Autobiography' is very circumstantial and interesting, and is referred to by Professor Bryce in his 'History of the Holy Roman Empire.'

In this he had no great success, since Goethe preferred to spend his time in the quiet and picturesque spots in the neighbouring country, where he occupied himself in producing sketches from nature, which were carefully preserved by his father as evidences of greater achievements in prospect. With his tutor also he made a longer journey, visiting Homburg, Wiesbaden, Mainz, and other towns in the fine district which lies between Frankfort and the Rhine.*

Under his father's direction he began to study jurisprudence, in preparation for his further studies at Leipsic, to which university it was now determined that he should proceed. On the other hand, there was no want of ordinary means of enjoyment. With his sister, to whom he was always much attached, and on whose sympathy he reckoned in all youthful troubles, he had formed a pleasant circle of acquaintance amongst young people of their own standing; and social intercourse, in winter in each others' houses, in summer on pleasant excursions, was gaily kept up. One of his chief friends was Horn, who was also about to proceed to Leipsic. Of lively temperament, and small if not grotesque in person, he was the *lustige Person* or "merry Andrew" of their meetings, but at the same time he had sufficient ability and good sense to retain Goethe's friendship so long as their paths lay together.

In this way Goethe's sixteenth year passed quickly, notwithstanding some remains of discontent which caused him to look forward eagerly to his departure from his native city. He set out in the month of October 1765, and after experiencing some delay on account of the badness of the roads, he arrived at Leipsic in the midst of the annual book-fair, the celebrated resort of bookbuyers from all parts of Europe. The interest of this occasion added to the favourable impression made by the handsome and regular streets of a town which differed as widely as

* It might be inferred from the absence of anything to the contrary in the 'Autobiography,' that this was the only occasion of his absence from home until his departure for Leipsic. A letter, however, written from Leipsic to a friend named Trapp mentions his having been at Worms, which is at least forty miles from Frankfort. It is written in French (by no means Parisian), and refers to a young lady whom he appears to have admired.

possible from the one in which he had hitherto lived. After taking lodgings at an inn (*Feuerkugel* *) he hastened to present his letters of introduction, and to enrol himself as a member of the university.

SECTION II.—*University Life: Leipsic and Strasbourg.* 1765–1771.

Goethe's own wishes would not have inclined him to choose Leipsic as his university. His natural bent was towards general literature rather than law, and he indulged in the secret hope of following in the steps of such men as Michaelis and Heyne, and attaining to a university professorship. To this end he would have preferred Göttingen, but his father was determined that jurisprudence should claim his first attention, and Leipsic was the most suitable university for the attainment of his object.

On presenting a letter of introduction to Hofrath Boehme, professor of history and public law, Goethe frankly expressed his inclinations in favour of literature; but he found his confidence peremptorily checked by the worthy jurist, who hated poetry and *belles-lettres*, and whose class he was forthwith compelled to join. He carried his point, however, so far as to attend lectures on literature by Gellert, a man of great popularity amongst the students. The instructions of Boehme were also compensated for by the friendship of his wife, an accomplished lady, who interested herself in the raw young student, corrected his peculiarities, and initiated him into the ways of refined society. For in this respect he found that he had much to learn. The manners and customs of the free and independent trading city of Frankfort were not as those of a centre of learning and mental cultivation such as Leipsic. As Mephistopheles is made to say—

> Es ist ein klein Paris und bildet seine Leute.†

And the very dialect of Frankfort sounded strange in Saxon ears. Moreover, Goethe's dress was far from fashionable: it was not only provincial, but having been made at home in accordance with one of his father's whims, was doubly incorrect.

* Situate between what are now *Universität Strasse* and the *Neumarkt*.
† i.e. "A little Paris 't is, and cultivates its people."—'Faust,' part i.

Frau Boehme also improved his literary taste. Her criticisms on many of the writers of the day were dictated less by the prejudices of her husband than by common sense and natural good taste; and in a negative way she was of use to Goethe, in setting in a true light much that he had hitherto admired.*

Goethe's life at Leipsic might be described from several different points of view. It is only natural that an individuality so many-sided as his should exhibit itself in a marked way in several different aspects, and it follows that observers who fail to take in the whole, may form very different estimates of his character. And since this remark applies no less to his whole life, it may explain the very diverse feelings, ranging from sincere admiration to something like repugnance, which his character makes on different individuals. The studious element was by no means wanting in him, but it was considerably outweighed by a general and quickly-aroused interest in any matter which appealed to the intellect. The study of art and modern literature is not bad in itself; but, considered in reference to the object with which he was sent to Leipsic, it might disparagingly be called waste of time, and lay him open to the charge of dilletantism. Combined with both the above characteristics was that which is all but universal in youth, the mere enjoyment of life and society, which in his case was sometimes allowed to degenerate into extravagance of conduct or objectless encouragement of emotional sentiment. It is, however, not surprising that in the 'Autobiography,' written years afterwards, we find much space given to the subjects of literature and art, whilst the less orderly aspect of his student life is barely touched upon.†

* The seventh book of the 'Autobiography' gives a detailed criticism of contemporary literature. He describes (trans. i. 226) an amusing visit which he paid to Gottsched, who had once exercised a great, though not a favourable influence, as a critic. His day was now over, and though still a celebrity he was, as Jahn says, "without influence, and more a curiosity."

† This fact hardly justifies the general imputation which Mr. Lewes has cast upon this part of the 'Autobiography.' That Goethe wasted a great deal more time than he expressly accounts for may be taken for granted, even without the evidence of the few letters that help to prove it. The singularity of Goethe is, that a serious substratum consciously underlay all his extravagance; and it is natural that in mature years he should record what he had most pleasure in remembering.

So we are not surprised to read that he attended lectures on logic and philosophy with assiduity until about Shrovetide, when unfortunately in the neighbourhood of the professor's house "the most delicious fritters came hot out of the pan just at the hour of lecture," and in consequence his note-books fell into arrear, and the conclusion of the subject was lost. The worthy Boehme's lectures on jurisprudence fared no better. Goethe heard from him nothing more than he had repeated over and over again with his father, hence his good intentions were frustrated, and he ceased to persevere. In the meantime he learned to dress well, affected the airs of a dandy, spent money freely, and enjoyed after the manner of youth the first feelings of independence.

It was the custom in a German university for students to dine as regular boarders at the table of some respectable householder. Goethe's host was at first Hofrath Ludwig, professor of medicine, and at that time rector of the university. Here he was accustomed to meet medical students, in whose conversation he discovered a new field of interest which for a time excluded poetry. Before long, however, a Frankfort friend, J. G. Schlosser (who afterwards married his sister Cornelie), came to Leipsic, and introduced him to a new circle. Schlosser was ten years his senior, and a man of considerable ability. His object while at Leipsic was to visit the most distinguished scholars there resident, and in these visits Goethe was glad to accompany him, and his interest in literature and poetry, which want of sympathy had begun to repress, was re-awakened. Schlosser also introduced him to a new dinner-table, at the house of one Herr Schönkopf, who kept a respectable wine-shop in the Brühl. His wife, a person of good education, was a Frankfort woman, and naturally made her fellow-townsmen welcome. Goethe speedily became intimate in the family: and it was not long before he was in love with the eldest daughter, Anna Katrina, called by him Aennchen or Annette, and otherwise known as Käthchen. From a letter written by Horn, who was now in Leipsic, it appears that Goethe kept this love affair secret from his intimate friends, and even deceived them by affecting admiration for some other object; but Horn before long was introduced to the Schönkopfs, and became himself attached to a lady of their acquaint-

ance. For Goethe the affair had no lasting consequences. He confesses to have indulged without cause in fits of ill-humour and affected jealousy; and though Käthchen bore his caprices with "incredible patience," the time came when he found that he had tired out her affection for him. Their friendship, however, lasted until he left Leipsic; soon afterwards she married. The episode only had importance inasmuch as it originated the first of his extant dramas, 'Die Laune des Verliebten,'* which, like nearly all his writings, was directly prompted by his personal experience.

Another sort of influence was brought to bear on him through Ernst Wolfgang Behrisch, a man between thirty and forty years old, who came to Leipsic as tutor to the young Count Lindenau. He was thin, well built, with striking features, and fastidious though singular in his dress. His mind was as remarkable as his external appearance: he was, so to speak, naturally affected, a serious trifler, paying attention to small matters, and doing everything deliberately and with whimsical care. At the same time he had good sense and abilities, was well versed in modern languages and literature, and cultivated a talent for caligraphy. As an older man, experienced in the world, he had an influence on Goethe which was in some respects good. That time was wasted in amusement, in trifling, and in absurd and objectless disquisitions, in which species of conversation Behrisch exhibited much misapplied talent, is not to be denied; but inasmuch as he had some real appreciation of literature and was censorious in his criticism of modern poetry, he exercised a wholesome effect on his young friend's intellectual progress. For example, it will not be disputed that he was right in urging Goethe not to print his youthful poems: on this condition only he exhibited forbearance towards them, and by way of compensation he undertook to copy them himself into a volume in a neat and artistic manner with ornamented letters and vignettes; which task, after long preparation, and the expenditure of

* Translated by E. A. Bowring, under the title 'The Wayward Lover,' together with 'Die Mitschuldigen' ('The Fellow-culprits'), which was written soon afterwards.

much thought and minute care, was at length successfully accomplished. This collection probably included those which were afterwards printed as 'New Songs, set to music by Bernhard Theodor Breitkopf,' without Goethe's name, some of which are now printed in his poems. How he became acquainted with the family of Breitkopf, the publishers (whose name is still eminent in that trade), is not clear from the 'Autobiography.' Possibly it was through their house being close by his lodgings in the Neumarkt; and however that might be, it appears that he was intimate both with the elder and younger family. They supplied in some measure the loss of Frau Boehme, who died after a lingering illness before his departure from Leipsic. By her death the last link which held him to the avowed end of his residence at the university was broken, and henceforth Hofrath Boehme and jurisprudence sank out of sight. Yet there was no cessation in his real mental education. Not only literature but practical art occupied his attention. Concerts and theatres absorbed much of his time, and the lovely voice of Corona Schröter, then just sixteen years old, produced an impression upon him, which led to a later theatrical connexion at Weimar. He had early made the acquaintance of A. F. Oeser, director of the Academy of Design, an artist whose productive power seems to have been less than his ability as a teacher and suggestor. Goethe, in company with several young men of good family, regularly took lessons from him, at his apartments in the old castle of Pleissenburg.* Oeser taught him to find beauty in simplicity and directness of expression, and to discard the meaningless and heavy detail which characterised the decorative art of the day. Oeser was an ardent admirer of Winckelmann, with whose works his pupil now became acquainted; and the theoretical instruction which he derived from them was supplemented by the appearance of Lessing's 'Laokoon,' in which beauty is set forth as the essential condition of the highest plastic art, and its divergence in that respect from the kindred art of poetry for the first time clearly demonstrated.

* Amongst the friends with whom he became acquainted through Oeser was von Hardenberg, afterwards the celebrated Prussian statesman.

Goethe was not wanting in assiduity. Not content with drawing, he tried the difficult arts of etching and engraving. With the assistance of an engraver named Storck, he etched several plates after landscapes by Thiele and others, some of which are extant, and show a certain amount of dexterity. By these means Goethe became theoretically an artist; but it must be confessed that, in spite of practice and an earnest desire to succeed, he never attained facility in carrying out his designs. The spirit was willing enough, but the necessary physical qualifications—the essential but inexplicable alliance between hand and eye which makes a practical artist, was absent. It was long, however, before he learned this; and notwithstanding practical failure, he acquired a true interest in art which never waned.

The proximity of Dresden to Leipsic prompted him to pay a visit to the famous picture-gallery of the Saxon capital. The few days which he spent there were a new revelation to him; but by his own account the pictures which were of most interest to him were those of Dutch and kindred schools, which he could compare with aspects of nature familiar to him. The Italian pictures he did not as yet understand, and, as he states, took their merits upon trust.

The time now approached at which he was to leave Leipsic, but before his departure he was attacked by a serious illness, the result of an irregular and unwholesome course of life. A system of diet comprising much beer and coffee, together with late hours, disordered his digestive powers; and alternations to the other extreme, by fitful attempts to carry out the precepts of Rousseau, in respect to sleeping on a hard bed with scanty covering, and other such ill-regulated strivings after primitive simplicity, did not mend matters. The mixture of dissipation and asceticism produced a constitutional crisis, which took the form of violent hemorrhage; and for the moment imperilled his life. With due care he surmounted the danger, but was for long troubled with a tumour. In these days of illness, however, it gave him pleasure to find that, in spite of his neglect of duties, and the carelessness or petulance which he had often exhibited to his best friends, he still retained the regard of those whose friendship he most prized. Not only the Breitkopfs and Horn, but others also of superior age

and standing, visited him, and aided his recovery by taking him out, or inviting him to their houses in the country. By August 1768 he had regained tolerable health, and at the end of that month returned to Frankfort.

He reached home with no feeling of pleasure or self-satisfaction, but rather, as he says, "like one shipwrecked." A sense of neglected duties, an unhappy state of mind in respect to Käthchen Schönkopf, and the remains of his recent illness, combined to produce a condition the reverse of "mens sana in corpore sano." Some of his letters to Leipsic friends abound in comparisons unfavourable to Frankfort. "He who has not seen Leipsic," he wrote to Breitkopf, "might do very well here;" and to Oeser he calls his native town one "which is too much the antithesis of Leipsic to have much attraction for him." Domestic circumstances, moreover, were not such as to add to his comfort; for during his absence Cornelie had borne the whole brunt of their father's didactic pedantry, and by dint of an unceasing routine of languages, composition, and harpsichord-playing, had been reduced to a state of mind in which mechanical and unwilling obedience only concealed discontent and bitterness towards her taskmaster. She therefore turned on her brother the whole current of a deeply affectionate but peculiar and sensitive nature. By devoting herself to nursing and enlivening him, she regained her proper nature; and the close ties which already existed between them, were strengthened by the sense of mutual dependence.

Their mother, in the dreariness of the preceding three years, had turned her thoughts to religion, and found her society in a small circle of serious-minded ladies. As chief amongst these is named the Fräulein von Klettenberg.* It was by the conversation and letters of this lady that 'The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul' inserted in 'Wilhelm Meister' were suggested. She was of good birth, and a pleasing natural demeanour was made still more graceful by the manners of refined society. She suffered from an incurable disorder, which she bore with the greatest patience; in intervals of relief she was lively and talkative. She admired Wolfgang, and treated him as a younger

* See note, p. 67.

brother; and if she did not make a convert of him, she succeeded in directing his thoughts to religious subjects, which led him to the construction of a system of theology harmonizing in some sort with her own tenets. He thus became intimate with Legationsrath Moritz and others of the Herrnhüter community, disciples of Count Zinzendorf.

Fräulein von Klettenberg was also a believer in occult science. In those days a faith in alchemy still lingered in the byways of medicine, and the doctor who attended Goethe professed to be in possession of a mysterious specific, which was only to be applied in cases of the direst need. As a member of their religious sect, he had the unlimited confidence of the women. Under his advice Fräulein von Klettenberg eagerly engaged in the study of sundry works, half chemical, half cabalistic; and not content with theory only, she busied herself with crucibles and retorts, in search for the universal specific. Goethe, and even his mother, joined in these researches; and if no immediate result was obtained, their studies were not without some permanent effect, to which several scenes in the immortal drama of 'Faust' bear witness.

Notwithstanding some further trouble from the tumour in his neck, Goethe's health gradually improved, and it was now decided that he should complete his academical course. His father's designs were still fixed on jurisprudence, and Strasbourg was selected as the university at which he could most conveniently take his degree. The intervening period was not wholly given to dabbling in mysticism. He devoted some of it to quiet retrospection and self-criticism. He read over his letters written from Leipsic, and carefully noted their peculiarities and defects, even in respect to language and handwriting. He again reverted to drawing, and experimented in etching so assiduously as to injure his throat with the fumes of the acid employed in the process, when it occurred to him that the outbreak of his illness at Leipsic might be attributable to the same cause. His final act before leaving home, was to look over his poetical compositions, and to destroy all, including several unfinished dramas; excepting only the MS. copied out by Behrisch, and the two plays 'Die Mitschuldigen' and 'Die Laune

des Verliebten,' which he had carefully touched up from time to time.

He started for Strasbourg in the spring of 1770, being then in his twenty-first year, and arrived on the 2nd of April.

His first attention was given to the cathedral, of which the single lofty spire had aroused his interest as he approached through the narrow streets. He ascended at once to the external gallery, and gazed admiringly over the fair tract of country, the luxuriant plain beautifully intersected by the devious course of the Rhine, which was destined for a time to be his home.

He took a lodging in the Fischmarkt,* and secured a place at a dinner-table kept by two maiden ladies. His fellow-boarders were mostly medical students; but there were also older men, and in particular the president of the table, Dr. Salzmann, a bachelor of between sixty and seventy years old. Neat and methodical in appearance and habit, and estimable in character, he maintained the good order and respectability of the table. He held the position of actuary† to the university, which was in some respects similar to that of a college tutor at Oxford or Cambridge; and as he became especially well disposed to Goethe, he came to be regarded by him as a confidential adviser in many matters besides such as related to his studies.

Goethe's professed object, as already stated, was to take a degree in jurisprudence, and for this end he secured the aid of a private tutor, known in German universities as a *repetent*. But the literal and formal treatment of the subject was already familiar to him through his previous reading, and the more philosophical and historical aspect of the study, which was alone calculated to interest him, was not encouraged. His activity being thus restricted in his special department, he found another field for his energies. At the dinner-table, as formerly at Hofrath Ludwig's at Leipsic, his fellow-boarders talked chiefly of medical matters, and as he became more intimate with them, his propensity to throw himself into the interests of all with whom he came in contact did not allow of his remaining a listener. At the commencement of his second half year,

* Now known as No. 80. † See note to Letter 39.

therefore, he attended a course of lectures on chemistry and anatomy, and continued to do so with more or less regularity. But his studies were not pursued without many counter-attractions. Only a month after his arrival a public event of importance gave occasion for unusual festivity. This was the passing visit of the young Archduchess of Austria, the ill-starred Marie Antoinette, but now the newly-married bride of the equally unfortunate Louis XVI. The town of Strasbourg, though German in history and character, had been assigned at the peace of Westphalia, with the whole of Alsace, to France. It was here, therefore, as the frontier town, that the queen was surrendered to the care of her husband's ambassador. On a small island in mid-Rhine a building had been erected for her reception, and in it, amongst other costly decorations, were exhibited some specimens of the tapestries worked after Raffaelle's cartoons. These Goethe had an opportunity of seeing, and though unable, as formerly at Dresden, to define in what manner he was interested, his artistic sense was so struck that he made several visits to the place, and even used his influence to procure an extension of the time for which the decorations were on view. His intuitive taste was, on the other hand, offended by the adornment of the principal saloon, in which tapestries by a modern French artist, illustrating the history of Jason and the tragic fate of his bride Creusa, were hung, with clumsy disregard to the inappropriateness of the subject, and the possible omen, which later events seemed to justify with too much truth.

Goethe was introduced by Salzmann to several families in Strasbourg. He was at this time in the prime of youth. Though of middle size, his well-built frame and fine bust made him appear tall. His handsome features and dark eyes at once attracted immediate attention from everyone, whilst brilliant conversational powers, and ready sympathy with every one with whom he came in contact, ensured him general good will. He was not insensible to his personal advantages, and did not disdain to improve their effect by attention to fashion. He submitted to have his naturally fine hair curtailed, and tied up in the customary *queue*, and adopted the silk stockings and shoes worn by well-dressed men. Finding that a knowledge of dancing

was requisite, he took lessons from a French professor of the art, whose instructions were enlivened by the assistance of two pretty daughters. One of these fell in love with Goethe; he however preferred the other, who was already engaged, and hence ensued a dramatic situation which gave occasion to a graphic and amusing episode in his 'Autobiography.'*

That he put little restraint if any on his inveterate propensity towards sentimental relations with the other sex, may be inferred from one or two poems written at this period; but all others were presently obliterated by a more serious attachment, which, though it was not destined to affect materially his career or history, produced a more than usually lasting impression on his mind. Previously to this, however, he had formed a friendship with a man whose influence on his intellectual development cannot be overlooked. This was Johann Gottfried Herder, who had come to Strasbourg as companion to the Prince of Holstein-Eutin. He was then twenty-six years of age, and consequently five years older than Goethe, and had already a considerable reputation as a critical writer. On his arrival being known, Goethe took the first opportunity of introducing himself. He was received with politeness, and the acquaintance rapidly grew into intimacy. Herder was suffering from a malady in one of his eyes, which he hoped to have cured whilst at Strasbourg. Goethe was present during the painful operations which were necessary, and admired the courage with which he submitted to them, and to the disappointment which ensued when they were found to be ineffectual. The useful influence which Herder exercised upon him was due to superior knowledge, gravity, and maturity of mind. His intellect, if the less versatile and vivacious, had a keenness and precision which aroused Goethe's respect. It is not uncommonly observed how a more highly gifted mind allies itself with one which if by comparison commonplace is at the same time superior in training and in moral qualities, and this perhaps characterises the relations between Goethe and Herder. The respect of the former continued to exist in spite of, and perhaps in consequence of, a certain coldness and a repel-

* See book ix.

lant phase of humour on Herder's part, who was apt to be intolerant of foibles from which his own temperament was free. Their intercourse for the present was not of long duration, for Herder left Strasbourg as soon as his health allowed, and it was not until both were at Weimar that it was personally renewed.

Amongst various books which Herder had introduced to his notice was Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which, though published so recently as 1766, had already been translated into German. Herder regarded it from the critical point of view, and claimed admiration for it as an eminent work of art, but whilst Goethe was willing enough to adopt his judgment as a critic, he was still more ready to fall in with its sentimental interest from the fact that at about this time circumstances had brought him into contact with a family which forcibly called up into real life the chief characters of Goldsmith's romance. This was the family of Pastor Brion, the clergyman of the small village of Sesenheim, near Drusenheim, a town in Alsace situate not far from the banks of the Rhine.

He first visited this family in October 1770, with a fellow-student, who being a relative was in the habit of riding over occasionally from Strasbourg to spend a few days with them. Goethe, with a characteristic whim, chose to present himself on this first occasion as a poor divinity student, in which disguise he was cordially received by the pastor and his wife and their two elder daughters. These maidens were not above wearing the native Alsatian costume, which in country districts was not yet superseded by the French mode, and which displayed to especial advantage the neat figure and pretty face of Friederike the younger of the two, then a girl of sixteen. The whole household was unpretending yet cheerful, and the air of simplicity combined with refinement which pervaded it, so forcibly brought to Goethe's mind the family of the vicar of Wakefield that when later a youthful son joined the party he was on the point of exclaiming, "What! Moses here too?"

In the presence of such good people the counterfeit divinity student grew ashamed of his disguise, and the next morning he devised a pleasant way of freeing himself from

the embarrassment of continuing to play a false part. During the few days of his stay it became an object with him to show himself in the most attractive light. The idyllic influence of a beautiful country, fine weather, and the society of a charming girl, as fresh and unsophisticated as she was frank and lively, was not to be withstood by Goethe's susceptible heart, and when he and Friederike parted they were already under the spell of mutual love.

To follow out the history of this episode with all the fulness with which it is attractively set forth in the 'Autobiography'* is not necessary, nor would it be possible with any due regard to space. It will be sufficient to say that Goethe found frequent opportunities of visiting Sesenheim, and that with each visit the sentiment on both sides grew stronger.† The family of Friederike considered that a tacit engagement existed between the two, and such were their relations when Olivia (for so Goethe names the elder sister, though her real name was Salomea) and Friederike paid a visit to some friends in Strasbourg.

A period of pause and reflexion must occur in the most thoughtless career of pleasure, and this visit to Strasbourg aroused the latent sense of responsibility which Goethe had hitherto succeeded in repressing. Friederike in the city amongst more smartly dressed and town-bred women was not the Friederike of the country. She was in herself no less loving and loveable, but, like a jewel wrongly set, she was in circumstances disadvantageous to her, and was not in harmony with her environment. The perception of this fact, and the approaching termination of his university career, recalled him to reason. Friederike herself was not without foreboding, which, as it became visible, made her presence a reproach to him. The departure of the sisters was therefore a relief to his mind—"a stone seemed to fall from his heart," and he sought further distraction in literary activity and in preparation for his degree.

At this time Shakspere was becoming revealed to Germans through the translation of Wieland, and the

* See books x. and xi.

† There are a number of beautiful lyrics amongst his poems assignable to this period.

criticisms of Lessing and Herder. By youthful enthusiasts he was at once regarded as a divinity before whose rugged strength and greatness the narrow formalities and meaningless art of the French school of tragic writers were swept away. Goethe and Lenz, a man of some poetical talent, were leading spirits in the new Shakspere-cult. Of the former an oration has been preserved which, in spite of magniloquence, very clearly testifies to the genuineness of the impression made on him by the English dramatist: Lenz on his part earned applause by the ingenuity with which he could imitate the intricate turns of humour and metaphor with which Shakspere's plays and sonnets abound.

Amidst the alternate distractions of love, literature, and gaiety, it is obvious that the object with which Goethe came to Strasbourg received little attention. His practical study had been directed chiefly to medicine; and amongst his more intimate friends was Heinrich Jung, who was afterwards better known as a surgeon under the name of Stilling. Under these influences jurisprudence had been treated merely as a collateral affair. For a degree, however, the necessary preliminary was "a disputation" held with his fellow-students, the subject of which was either a treatise written for the occasion by the candidate, or a set of "theses" which he undertook to maintain. The latter was the easier process, but it was Rath Goethe's wish that the other should be adopted. Finding ecclesiastical history more familiar to him than any more strictly legal theme, he started with the proposition that "it is the duty of a legislator to establish a certain form of worship, from which neither clergy nor laity should free themselves." This he supported with some dexterity, and sent a copy of the essay, written in Latin, to his father, who, though disappointed in the subject, was pleased with the general result. The faculty also complimented him, but probably disapproving officially of the Protestant point of view from which it was written, declined to receive and print it as usual. This result was by no means displeasing to Goethe, who had learnt through Herder to mistrust his own critical powers, and, what is more strange, had imbibed from Behrisch an unaffected

dislike to seeing his compositions in print. He therefore fell back upon theses, which he worked up with his *repetent;* a successful disputation was held, and the important occasion was concluded, according to custom, by a merry symposium amongst the students. He obtained his degree of Licentiate of Laws on 6th August, 1771.

He remained nearly three weeks longer at Strasbourg, in the course of which he once more saw Friederike, leaving her with tears in her eyes; it was eight years before he saw her again, and for the last time.

On the 25th August he started for Mannheim, where he wished to see the museum of antiquities, which contained casts of many of the finest antique sculptures. Here he saw for the first time the 'Apollo Belvedere,' the 'Dying Gladiator,' and, with especial interest, the work which Lessing had made famous throughout Germany, the Laokoon group. At Mainz his interest was aroused in a different manner, by a young harper who happened to please him. On the spur of the moment he invited him to come to Frankfort with him, thereby somewhat embarrassing the worthy Frau Goethe, who had the trouble of finding suitable lodgings for her son's unexpected companion.

His father was not displeased with the conclusion of his academical career, and no time was lost in starting the young jurist in the practice of his vocation, for he at once applied for leave to practise as an advocate, and on the 3rd September was sworn in as an *Advocatus ordinarius* before the Bürgermeister of the city.*

SECTION III.—*Publication of 'Goetz v. Berlichingen' and 'Werther': 'Lili.'* 1771–1775.

Goethe, however, was not destined to remain long at home. In the spring of the next year he again left Frankfort. The few intervening months are nevertheless of importance in the history of his intellectual development. He was now passing from the period of tutelage to that of independence. Hitherto his aims and experiences had been limited to the student-world, and

* See Düntzer: 'Goethes Leben,' p. 139.

co-ordinated within the microcosm of a university. They now became widened in scope, and placed in relation to the world at large. Hence to this period must be referred the commencement of his public life, and in it will be found the first sure indications of those qualities which brought him into contact with the public.

At this period was commencing that literary movement known in Germany as the "Sturm und Drang," or, as translated by Carlyle, "Storm and Stress." Hitherto France had been the leading nation in literature; and in other countries, especially in Germany, French taste, and the classic traditions of the Academy, involving the three dramatic unities, and such-like antique proprieties, had been paramount. But now, in literature as in politics, ideas hitherto current were discovered to be founded on unreality, and were rapidly coming to be regarded as superfluous. A new school arose, the watchwords of which were Nature and Truth. Its existence was perceptible in England and France no less than in Germany, but in the last the movement took a more violent form. "Sturm und Drang" in Germany was a revolt of the new generation against false and untenable canons of literary criticism, and was analogous in its sphere to the great French revolution in political history.

The writings of Klopstock had given the first indications of the birth of a genuine German school of literature. His 'Messiah,' 'Hermansschlacht' ('Arminius-fight'), and 'Odes' had appealed directly to the German people of the middle class. An impetus being thus given, the sudden discovery, so to speak, of Shakspere, and the wonderful influence exerted by the fabricated poems called "Ossian's," contributed, partly as cause and partly as effect, to augment it beyond due bounds. "The wisdom and extravagance of that age united in one stream: the masterly criticisms of Lessing — the enthusiasm for Shakspere — the mania for Ossian and the northern mythology—the revival of ballad literature—and imitations of Rousseau, all worked in one rebellious current against established authority. There was one universal shout for Nature. With the young, Nature seemed to be a compound of volcanoes and moonlight; her force, explosion; her beauty, sentiment.

To be insurgent and sentimental, explosive and lachrymose, were the true signs of genius. Everything established was humdrum. Genius, abhorrent of humdrum, would neither spell correctly nor write correctly nor demean itself correctly. It would be *German*—lawless, rude, and natural; lawless it was, and rude it was, but not natural according to the nature of any reputable type." *

In the list of works by which this description might be illustrated may be mentioned 'Ugolino' by Gerstenberg, and 'Sturm und Drang' by Klinger. Nine years later the publication of Schiller's 'Robbers,' and the tremendous popularity which it gained, marked the climax of the movement. Its effect on Goethe is evident in his letters, and inspires his drama of 'Goetz von Berlichingen.' The framework of this piece was derived from the old 'Chronicle' of Gottfried—a genuine autobiographic narrative written by one Gottfried (or Goetz) von Berlichingen, a robber-baron who flourished in the sixteenth century. Like others of those times, he acknowledged no lord but the emperor, and lived a life of continual feud and warfare with his neighbours; but unlike the majority of his fellows, Goetz of the iron hand had a sense of right and wrong. A sort of German Robin Hood, he was ever ready to hear the tale of the oppressed, and to mete out on the oppressor a rough and ready substitute for justice. In this stalwart personage Goethe recognised a type of the German character and nationality of his century, and his aim was now to reinvest it with life.

At Strasbourg he had been led to study mediæval history, and had gained a conception of its life. To this he had been mainly incited by his profound admiration for the cathedral, the outward form and history of which he had carefully investigated. Many years later, he wrote, in reference to some drawings of the building which had been sent to him, "with pleasure I recalled the feelings of those years, when Strasbourg Minster forced admiration from me, and impelled me to strange

* G. H. Lewes's 'Life of Goethe,' 2nd ed. p. 97.

yet deeply felt utterances of enthusiasm." * The means by which material so supplied might be thrown into a dramatic form were amply suggested by Shakspere, and he had doubtless acquired a clear conception of his plan before his return to Frankfort. But he had often talked of the subject with his sister before anything was done; until one day she urged him not to be for ever talking, but if anything was to come of it to lose no more time. Thus instigated he sat down and speedily wrote off a few scenes: in a few weeks the whole was complete in its first form, and for the present it was left in MS.

In the meantime Goethe was enlarging his acquaintance. With Horn, Riese, and the brothers Hieronymus and J. G. Schlosser, who were old Frankfort friends, he was still intimate: through Herder's introduction he now came into contact with a new circle in Düsseldorf. The most noteworthy of these was Johann Heinrich Merck, who, though the son of an apothecary, had by his talents "raised himself to the companionship of princes," and now held the post of Kriegszahlmeister (army-paymaster) at Darmstadt. He had an admiration for English literature, and readily sympathized with the rising enthusiasm for Shakspere, and the aims of the young German school, but his mind was of too critical a cast to allow of his being a successful original writer. He was eight years older than Goethe, and the influence which he exercised on him, derived from a superior keenness of judgment, somewhat resembled that of Behrisch, with the difference that he was a man of higher aims and character. He was superficially characterised by a constant fund of satire and cynicism, with which he was ever ready to meet any weakness on the part of his friend; and to this is due the designation "Mephistopheles Merck" which is fre-

* See 'Annals,' an. 1810. In the present days of revived mediævalism the full significance of such an intuitive perception of beauty in Gothic art is apt to be overlooked. But it is equally remarkable in the case of Chatterton, whose 'Rowley' poems are so closely connected with the church of St. Mary Redcliffe. In those days the beauty of mediæval architecture was unrecognised, and to the few who appreciated it it appeared like a new revelation. There was barely three years' difference between the ages of Goethe and Chatterton, and they were working almost simultaneously.

quently applied to him in the 'Autobiography,' and which cannot be taken to imply any real disparagement on the part of Goethe, for whom, in fact, his friendship had considerable value.

At Merck's instigation J. G. Schlosser undertook to edit the *Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen*, a new journal, which, with frequent contributions from the latter and Goethe, became the organ of the "Sturm und Drang" party.

Early in the year 1772 it was determined that Goethe should increase his experience in jurisprudence by a visit to Wetzlar, the seat of the Reichskammergericht, or Imperial Chamber, which was in fact a sort of chancery for the whole empire. Ever since the Thirty Years' War suits had been accumulating year by year without any strenuous effort to clear them off, until they had reached the incredible number of 30,000, and were still on the increase. A commission had therefore been appointed, and had been some years in operation, for the object of solving this legal dead-lock, and of investigating the delinquencies of certain members of the chamber.

With such a prospect of legal work as these circumstances afforded, Goethe was surprised to find himself at once in the midst of a large and lively circle of young men, attached in various subordinate capacities to the commissioners of the various states. He was received with cordiality, and speedily initiated into their amusements, some of which were strongly coloured by the atmosphere of mediæval antiquity into which their vocation threw them. They had instituted a comic order of knighthood, in which each was known by an assumed name, such as St. Amand the Opinionative, Eustace the Prudent, Lubormirsky the Combative, and so on. Goethe himself, who was doubtless communicative about the subject then uppermost in his mind, was dubbed Goetz von Berlichingen der Redliche (i.e. the trusty), and he entered with much appreciation into the various eccentricities and extravagances of speech and conduct which were prescribed by the rules of this redoubtable company.* It is likely

* See Lewes's 'Life of Goethe,' p. 113.

that this fantastic idea was suggested by the relics of the old Teutonic order of knighthood, the *Teutsche Ritter*, which still survived in Wetzlar and other old towns. This order, of which perhaps the knights of Malta are the only modern parallel, was a remnant of German chivalry, a body from which the spirit had long departed, and which remained extant only as the corporate possessors of landed property in various parts of the empire. These possessions were managed by bailiffs, who frequently had charge of an official residence invariably designated as "Das Deutsche Haus." There was such a functionary at Wetzlar, and he has a special claim on our attention, for Herr Amptmann Buff was the father of Charlotte Buff, commonly known as Lottchen, the original of the heroine in Goethe's far-famed novel of 'Werther.' *

During the first months at Wetzlar Goethe's mind was still ill at ease in regard to Friederike. He could not at once throw off all remembrance of her, and felt at times the depression of spirits usual in such circumstances. But Charlotte Buff was destined to give his sentiments a new turn, and to exert an influence which in the end produced remarkable results. She was at this time only sixteen years of age, but was already informally engaged to Dr. Kestner, secretary to the Hanoverian legation, a sensible and earnest young man, endowed, moreover, with considerable self-control and magnanimity, as is proved by his letters referring to this period, which have since been published by his son. From these we learn that Goethe first made their acquaintance at a ball. "Lottchen," says Kestner, "at once fixed his attention. She is young, and although not regularly beautiful, has a very attractive face. . . . He did not know she was betrothed. I came a few hours later: and it is not our custom in public to testify anything beyond friendship to each other. He was exceedingly gay (this he often is, though at other times melancholy). Lottchen quite fascinated him, the more so because she took no trouble about it,

* For an account of the *Teutsches Ritterthum*, see Carlyle's 'Life of Frederick the Great,' book II. ch. vi. The Buffs' house was a smaller tenement at the left of the entrance to the *Deutsche Haus* at Wetzlar.

but gave herself wholly to the pleasure of the moment. The next day, of course, Goethe called to enquire after her. He had seen her as a lively girl, fond of dancing and pleasure: he now saw her under another and better aspect: in her domestic quality."

As the eldest of a large family of motherless children her duties were not light, but she discharged them in such a manner as to increase Goethe's admiration. He speedily became at home in the family circle, and was an especial favourite with the younger children. He could not long remain ignorant of the relations between Kestner and Lottchen, but he did not therefore admire her less, and the circumstances only served to attach him more closely to Kestner. "Our coincidence of taste," says the latter in a letter to a friend, "and a closer acquaintance with each other, formed between him and me the closest bond of friendship. . . . Meanwhile, although he was obliged to give up all hope in respect to Lottchen, and did in fact give it up, yet with all his philosophy and natural pride he could not so far master himself as to entirely control his affection, and he has qualities which might make him dangerous to a young woman—one, that is, of feeling and taste. But Lottchen knew how to treat him so that no hope could germinate within him, and he must himself have wondered at her plan of behaviour to him. His peace of mind suffered much in consequence; there were often remarkable scenes, in which Lottchen gained in my opinion; and he must needs become dearer to me as a friend, though I was often forced to wonder what strange creatures love can make of even the strongest and otherwise most self-contained people. I chiefly pitied him, and mental struggles arose within me when I thought that, on the one hand, I might not be in a position to make Lottchen so happy as he, but, on the other, could not endure the thought of losing her. The latter gained the upper hand, and in Lottchen I have not at any time been able to remark a suspicion of the same doubt." *

The position which the three held towards each other was a singular one, and not the less interesting because the

* 'Goethe and Werther,' by A. Kestner, p. 78.

magnanimity of Kestner deprived it of an element which might have made it more dramatic. But Goethe's self-control was not so complete, and there were times when he felt that his growing love for Charlotte placed an undue strain upon his sense of honour. This, however, could not but end in pain; and with the practical common sense which underlay all rashness, inconsiderateness, and even weakness in his conduct towards women, he determined to tear himself away. He left Wetzlar suddenly, leaving behind him a note for Kestner, in which he enclosed the following to Lotte.

"I hope indeed to come back again, but God knows when. Lotte, what did my heart feel whilst you were talking! for I knew that it was the last time that I should see you. Not the last time, and yet I am going away to-morrow. He is gone. What spirit led you to that subject. When I was forced to say all I felt, ah, my thoughts were of this life, and of your hand, which I kissed for the last time. The room into which I shall not return! and the dear father who accompanied me for the last time! I am now alone and may weep. I leave you happy, and shall not depart from your heart. I shall see you again—but not to-morrow is never. Tell my boys, he is gone. I can say no more." *

He left on the 11th of September, 1772. He had previously arranged with Merck to meet him at Coblentz, and thither he walked alone down the beautiful valley of the Lahn. On arriving he was introduced by Merck to the family of Geheimrath von Laroche, with whom they stayed for a short time. Frau von Laroche was a lady with literary abilities, and she found in Goethe a sympathetic critic. The society of her daughter Maximiliane, who was shortly afterwards married to Peter Brentano, and went to live in Frankfort, also afforded him consolation in the sorrow of his recent parting from Charlotte Buff.

On his return to Frankfort he gratified his father by working assiduously at his profession: at the same time he found time to write frequently for the *Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen*. Moreover, he now determined to make

* 'Goethe and Werther,' p. 45.

public his drama of 'Goetz,' and considering that it was in several respects artistically imperfect he re-wrote the whole. He had previously failed in finding any bookseller who would undertake to bring out his earlier comedy of 'Die Mitschuldigen'; and Merck now proposed to publish 'Goetz' at their joint expense, and thereby secure a larger share of the profit which they both ventured to anticipate. This plan was carried out, Goethe providing the paper and Merck being responsible for the printing; and in the next year (1773) the work was supplied to the public. It was at once a great success. Its originality of style and true German tone, its freedom from the conventionalities of the French school, fell in completely with the new tendencies of the time, and gained for it a reception in every class to which a literary production could appeal. That it proved pecuniarily profitable to Goethe and Merck is more doubtful, for such was the legal status of literature at that time that the author had no protection against piracy, and unauthorized reprints appeared in such numbers as effectually to alienate the proceeds of the sale from the rightful owners.

About this time he wrote the farce called 'Götter, Helden, und Wieland,' which, though a roughly-drawn satire, contained some fair restrictions on the literary style of the older poet. It was not intended for publication, and was certainly prompted by no personal hostility towards Wieland, who, by common consent, held perhaps the highest place amongst living German poets, and was now enjoying the patronage of the enlightened court of Saxe-Weimar. It was only at the request of Lenz, whom he afterwards supposed to have some sinister design, that Goethe allowed the farce to be printed, and it was satisfactory to him to find that Wieland took no offence, but was magnanimous enough to praise it in an article in his paper the *Deutsche Merkur*.

Amongst the letters of this and following years will be found a number addressed to Frau von Laroche, with whose family his intimacy continued to increase. A still larger number are addressed to Fräulein Johanna Fahlmer, a member of the same circle. She was the daughter of Georg Christoph Fahlmer, a manufacturer of Düsseldorf,

whose elder daughter by a former wife married a merchant named Jacobi, and became the mother of the poet Johann Georg and the philosopher Friedrich Heinrich (Fritz) Jacobi. Johanna was therefore the aunt of these brothers, though, being a year or two younger than either, she stood more in the relation of a sister or cousin. Goethe addresses her as *Tante* (aunt), though she was only five years his senior. At a later date she became the second wife of J. G. Schlosser, who was now about to marry Goethe's sister.* Notwithstanding the frank and friendly terms which he maintained with Johanna, Goethe had at first no liking for her two nephews, whose straightforwardness he appears to have doubted, but how exaggerated the prejudice was is evident from the sudden intimacy which began a year later, and which seems to have been brought about by Herder's influence.

In November, 1773, Goethe's sister Cornelie was married to F. G. Schlosser, and soon afterwards went to live at Emmendigen, where Schlosser accepted the position of Bailiff. Her departure was a great loss to her brother, for amidst all the transitions of feeling to which his emotional nature was liable, he retained a constant love for her, and an admiration for her mental qualities. Her married life was a short one, for she died in less than four years.

It was probably towards the end of the year 1773 that 'Werther' was begun, though it was not published until the autumn of 1774. The plan of the book must have been floating for some time in his mind. In October 1772 he had heard of the suicide of Jerusalem, a young man of good position and talents who had been attached to one of the legations at Wetzlar; Jerusalem had also been a student at Leipsic with Goethe.† The cause of his suicide was an unhappy passion for the wife of a friend. The tragedy made a deep impression upon Goethe, and it became interwoven in his mind with his own fruitless but less morbid attachment to Charlotte Buff, who in due course became the wife

* Cornelie died in 1776, and in 1778 the widower married again. Johanna Schlosser died in 1821 in her 78th year, but her direct correspondence with Goethe does not extend beyond 1781.

† Between the years 1765–1767: but he had not been intimate with Goethe. See Düntzer, 'Goethes Leben,' p. 71.

of Kestner. The result is well known in the famous 'Sorrows of Young Werther,' the hero of which, so far as emotion and impulse are concerned, is himself—but by no means himself in conduct and mental calibre. The abandonment of mind and intellect to one dominant craving and sentiment, such as must precede suicide from such a cause, are imitated from the character of the ill-fated Jerusalem. The heroine Lottchen is a closer, but not an exact portrait, of the real Charlotte, whose name he did not think it necessary to disguise; while the third character, Albert, the fortunate lover and husband, is but a caricature of the friendly, liberal-minded Kestner. The story is evolved, after the manner of Richardson and Rousseau, in a series of letters written by the unhappy hero, and this fact alone may tend to make it less attractive amongst ordinary readers of this day, who expect a more dramatic and lively method of treatment; but to the public of its time it appealed with the most extraordinary vividness. It was read in all classes of society, and was translated into many foreign languages. "Perhaps there never was a fiction which so startled and enraptured the world. Men of all kinds and classes were moved by it. It was the companion of Napoleon when in Egypt: it penetrated into China. To convey in a sentence its wondrous popularity, we may state that in Germany it became a people's book, hawked about the streets, printed on miserable paper, like an ancient ballad; and in the Chinese empire, Charlotte and Werther were modelled in porcelain."*

To Kestner and his wife the book was by no means pleasing. Goethe sent them a copy before its publication, assuming that they would have as much pleasure in reading as he had had in writing it; but they could only discern a distortion and unconcealed adaptation of their own characters and circumstances. The immense popularity of the book made it all the more obnoxious, and Kestner wrote a candid but easily justifiable reproof to their rash friend. This Goethe accepted with a frank apology and explanation, and his friends were easily induced to forgive his indiscretion.

Goethe by two successes had now gained popular

* Lewes's 'Goethe,' 2nd ed. p. 153.

fame, and notable people were glad to make his acquaintance. Amongst these may be mentioned Basedow, an eccentric and freethinking educational reformer; the sentimental metaphysician, Friedrich Jacobi; and the Countess von Stolberg. To Lavater and Klopstock he had already become known. The latter was in Frankfort just before the publication of 'Werther,' and on that occasion Goethe read to him portions of 'Faust,' the conception of which he had already formed in Strasbourg, but which was not to be completed for some years to come. A dramatic work on the subject of Mahomet was also in contemplation, but this unfortunately was never finished, though several songs to be introduced were written, one of which is now included in his poems. That the subject continued to interest him is, however, proved by his translation of Voltaire's drama in the year 1800. In these early days of his career some external and personal incentive seems to have been almost necessary to ensure success in production; so that while greater works were laid aside, a trifle of minor importance might be produced with very little effort under special instigation.

About this time a young lady,* one of his sister's friends in Frankfort, happened to gain his attention: and neither recollections of Lotte, nor his occupation with the subject of 'Werther,' prevented his falling in love with her. Matters had proceeded so far that his mother began to reckon upon his betrothal and marriage. This, however, was not to be, though their intimacy was not without an enduring result in the shape of 'Clavigo.' It happened that Goethe once took to a party at which this young lady was present, the so-called 'Mémoire' of Beaumarchais, a small volume which detailed the actual circumstances of a love story of which his sister, living in Madrid, was the unfortunate heroine—the recusant hero being Clavijo, a man who afterwards attained some literary note. The story was thoroughly dramatic, and Goethe's Fräulein, during an amiable *tête-à-tête* at the end of the evening, enjoined him to gratify her by turning it into a play.

* There is some doubt about her identity: Düntzer says it was a certain Fräulein Anna Sibylla Münch. Viehoff and Lewes identify her with Antoinette Gerock.

On the impulse of the moment he undertook to do this. By adopting the anecdote almost literally, and adding a suitable *dénouement*, he had redeemed his promise within the space of a week. The drama so produced, though of only second-rate importance as a literary work, was eminently adapted for the theatre. It became popular, and still holds a place on the stage.

Two other trifles written about the same time are the 'Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilern,' and the 'Prolog zu Bahrdts Neuesten Offenbarungen Gottes.' Goethe formed an intimate friendship with Lavater, which was, however, founded less upon any community of character and practical aims than upon the personal attractiveness of the man, the sincerity of his religious sentiments, which Goethe was always disposed to respect, and perhaps on their common friendship for the Fräulein von Klettenberg. Lavater was then at the height of his reputation; his well-known work on 'Physiognomy' was in preparation, and his communications with various people of note, in respect to their portraits, which he was having engraved for his forthcoming work, added interest to his society. They spent some time together in travelling in the neighbourhood of the Rhine and Lahn, and on one occasion were accompanied by Basedow. This philosopher, who was double Goethe's age, was eccentric in his conduct. Uncouth and dirty in his personal habits, described as never undressing to sleep, and as continually drinking beer and smoking, besides being a violent assailant of Christianity, he afforded an instructive contrast to Lavater. Under such opposing influences it is worthy of notice how strong a hold the Bible and Biblical theology continued to retain on Goethe's mind, notwithstanding that his whole intellectual constitution was opposed to religious dogmatism. A new moral impulse was brought to bear upon him about this time by the writings of Spinoza. That he studied the works of this great writer systematically is not to be supposed, for he was never addicted to precise metaphysical reading. But even a superficial acquaintance with that philosopher could not but impart to him clearer and broader views over the material and moral world. "I well remembered," he wrote afterwards, "what peace and

serenity came over me when I first glanced over the surviving works of that remarkable man. This sensation was still quite distinct to me, though I could not have recalled any particular point. But I hastened forthwith to the works to which I was so much indebted, and the same sense of peace took possession of me. I gave myself up to reading them, and thought when I scrutinised myself that the world had never looked so clear."*

As an illustration of his mental condition, if for no other reason, it must be regretted that he did not carry out a project conceived at this time for a poem on the subject of 'The Wandering Jew,' in which, without doubt, the character of the great Hebrew writer would have played a part.

At the beginning of 1775 Goethe completed his drama of 'Stella,' for the heroine of which Johanna Fahlmer is supposed by some to have been the model. It is an unpleasant story of a double attachment on the part of the hero Fernando; it had at first no artistic *dénouement*, the tragical ending was only devised later, when the play was produced at Weimar. This piece added nothing to Goethe's fame, and is only interesting because the circumstances of its origin have never been satisfactorily explained.†

Goethe was still in the first flush of renown, when it was his fate again to fall seriously in love. Amongst the rich inhabitants of Frankfort was a banker named Schönemann. He was not one of the old-fashioned burgher-class to which Goethe's relatives belonged, and when Goethe one evening accompanied a friend to the banker's private dwelling, he found himself in more fashionable society than that to which he was accustomed in his own circle. His attention was at once attracted to the daughter Anna Elizabeth, better known to readers of his works as Lili. She was pretty and graceful, not without some coquetry of manner; and being, above all, only sixteen years old she had all that attractiveness of early womanhood which,

* See books xiv. and xvii. of the 'Autobiography.

† It is strange that no one has suggested that it was founded on the story of Swift's Stella and Vanessa, with which Herder had doubtless made him familiar. See 'Autobiog.' (trans.) i. 448, and page 109 *below*.

when we recall the similar age of Gretchen, Friederike, Lotte, and other later favourites, seems in itself to have had a peculiar fascination for Goethe.

His visits to her parents' house became frequent, and, as was usual in his case, a mutual attachment speedily sprang up, without any recognition of responsibility or acknowledged thought of marriage. That his love was as ardent as it appeared to him in later years to have been, is open to question; but the sundry poems which owed their inspiration to Lili are, in a man with so much impulse and so free from pedantry, a proof that his thoughts were considerably engrossed by her.

In any case their relations had this peculiarity, that Lili may be considered to have been his superior in social standing, and that her parents did not for this reason encourage their attachment; which fact alone gave her a certain fictitious value. On the other hand, Goethe was well aware of the practical objections which a marriage with Lili would entail. Their parents lived in different spheres, and were separated by a difference of religious faith, which in those days implied a good deal.* He moreover looked forward to his bringing his bride to join their own domestic circle; and how would they welcome a fine lady, inured to luxury, elegance, and gay society; and how would she reconcile herself to the homely ways of their old-fashioned and unpretentious household? Matters however drifted on, until some definite resolution was necessary, at which point a well-disposed but officious friend intervened, and, with some difficulty, obtained the consent of the parents on both sides to a betrothal.

This result did not, however, remove Goethe's own misgivings. It is true that in contemplation of marriage he worked at his profession with more diligence; but as time wore on it became more and more clear to him that he was taking a step not warranted by prudence, or justified by his own feelings.

At this juncture the two young Counts von Stolberg came to Frankfort, on their way to Switzerland. Goethe was already engaged in a correspondence with their sister

* The Goethes were Lutherans; the Schönemanns held "Reformed" tenets.

Auguste, who though personally unknown to him had conceived a romantic sentiment for him which, as is evident from his letters, he was not slow to encourage. Now, anxious to try the effect of absence on his relations with Lili, he determined to join them, and left without taking leave. His companions, whilst intellectually well-endowed, were careless and unrestrained in conduct, and full of the wild enthusiasms characteristic of their age and encouraged by the youthful ideas of the time. At Darmstadt, where they stayed for some time, they excited public indignation by bathing in the open air, which, in a country where bathing under any circumstances was a novelty, was a grave breach of decorum. Merck, whom Goethe visited there, was much dissatisfied at his association with these "schoolboys" (*Burschen*), with whose eccentricities, however, Goethe had much innate sympathy. They also visited Klopstock together; and in Karlsruhe fell in with Karl August, the young Duke of Weimar, who urgently invited Goethe to visit him at Weimar.

Having passed through part of Switzerland together, Goethe and his two companions separated. He did not succeed in shaking off the thought of Lili, and on her account he resisted his own impulse and his father's wishes that he should go on to Italy.

On his return to Frankfort he found that attempts had been made to bring their engagement to an end. Lili herself did not acquiesce in these attempts, and would have been willing to give up all preceding ties, and emigrate with him to America, as he had once proposed. But his own irresolution again intervened, and he allowed himself to drift away from the channel, in which he might have steered his future course. He held himself aloof, and worked at a new tragedy, 'Egmont,' which, however, was not completed until many years afterwards, and the engagement was ultimately broken off. At about the same time he again saw Karl August, who was passing through Frankfort with his newly-married bride, and who repeated his invitation to visit him at Weimar.

Rath Goethe viewed this project unfavourably. His natural independence of character, and the prejudices of the class to which he belonged, made him suspicious of

court favour; and though acquiescence was at last obtained, it was not without prognostications of disappointment and an ignominious return.

Goethe, however, had more correctly estimated the character of the young Duke. He set off with pleasure, which was increased by the feeling of relief with which he separated himself from a period of irresolution and self-reproach; and on the 7th of November, 1775, he arrived at Weimar.

Section IV.—*Weimar: Tour in Italy.* 1775–1788.

Though the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar was one of the less important principalities of Germany, its history yields to few in interest. Its capital, Weimar, is prominent in the early history of the Reformation, and its near neighbourhood to the Thuringian Forest and the Wartburg associate it closely with one of the most interesting episodes of Luther's life. The Wartburg also has an earlier interest for literary historians, inasmuch as it was the scene of the poetical contests of the Minnesingers, whose banquet hall is still to be seen.

To the lover of letters Weimar had something more than historical associations at the end of the eighteenth century; for though this small capital was little more in appearance than a provincial town, it was the seat of a reigning family of more than usual enlightenment, whose pride it was to gather round them an intellectual circle, sufficient to reflect upon it a peculiar intellectual renown.

The widowed Duchess Amalia was its animating spirit. Though of no remarkable mental culture, she had the special and unattainable faculty of detecting and appreciating intellectual greatness in others. She had also a happy disregard for formalities and differences of rank, which enabled her, and those to whom she extended her friendship, to derive the greatest amount of mutual advantage therefrom. She selected Wieland as a tutor for her two sons, and he became an intimate personal friend, and a permanent resident at the court. Next to him in celebrity may be ranked Musaeus; whilst her treasurer

Bertuch, and the chamberlain Seckendorf, had each a reputable place in German literature. Of the other sex, the Frau von Stein is especially to be noticed, on account of the sentiment which she was destined to awaken in Goethe's heart, and which influenced him for so long.

These were the principal figures in the court-circle of Weimar when Karl August assumed his hereditary honours. He was himself, perhaps, the most noteworthy figure of all. His character was far from an ideal one, but it had points of strength which more than compensated for its defects. In so far as he exhibited some coarseness of feeling, and a laxity of morals in relation to women, he was neither better nor worse than most men of that time. It is to be remembered that he was at this time at the most careless period of life, and that the general tone of German society was low, and a *liaison*, provided that it was sufficiently sentimental to be interesting, was looked upon as venial, both on the part of man and woman. If Karl August as an individual was unrestrained in habits, and careless of public opinion, he never forgot as the head of a state his duties towards his subjects.

Though only nineteen years old, he already exhibited an amount of independence and decision which, being for the most part beneficially exercised, distinctly stamp him as a good ruler. His regard for Goethe, and for other men of talent, prove that he inherited the best quality of his mother's character. His worst points were on the surface, as is evident from the fact that he retained the esteem of all who once knew him well. At the period of Goethe's arrival, he had just brought home his bride, the Princess Louise of Hesse-Darmstadt, who was in all respects worthy of him.

To this circle Goethe came for a visit of a few weeks, not anticipating that Weimar was henceforth to be his home. There was no want of precedents for this patronage of the son of a simple citizen by a reigning sovereign. Since Frederick the Great had made literature a royal pursuit, and patronised it, though with a somewhat unfortunate result, in the person of Voltaire, it had been considered a sign of enlightenment to extend favour to literary men. In this way the careers of Klopstock, Wieland, and Merck had been materially assisted; and Goethe was

able to accept the Duke's invitation without any feeling of being lowered in his own or others' estimation.

The Duke received him as a friend, and was certainly at no pains to maintain a show of dignity. All reserve was laid aside between them from the first. They indulged together in the maddest pranks, in which Goethe, though the elder by seven years, was the aider and abettor of the Duke. They spent days and nights in each other's society; they hunted, drank, and gambled together. On one occasion they were seen cracking sledge-whips in the market-place of Jena for a wager. At night they finished up with carousals, in which wine was drunk from skulls. A costume in accordance with that ascribed to Werther became the ordinary garb of the men; for the green cloth coat with brass buttons, leather breeches, and top-boots, originally adopted from the English country gentleman's dress of the period, was then considered to express in its wearer all that was romantic and sentimental. Goethe was for a time the rage, and the ladies, not less than the men, were subservient to his influence. Through him skating parties were introduced at court. Until glorified in Klopstock's odes, skating had been looked upon at Weimar as a plebeian amusement; but Goethe's enthusiasm for, and skill in the art, overcame all remaining prejudices, and brought it into vogue. The young Duchess herself was soon a proficient; and masked parties on the ice, illumined with fireworks and lamps, became fashionable and frequent.

A few weeks of such dissipation, however, more than satisfied Goethe. He longed for quiet, and therefore left Weimar for a short and solitary journey to Waldeck. When he returned, at the impatient summons of the Duke, he was still undecided whether to go back at once to Frankfort, or to accept an official position at the court. His growing regard for Karl August prevailed, and in April 1776 he was appointed "Geheime Legations Rath" (privy councillor), with a salary of 1200 thalers (£200).

This appointment of a man of middle class to a high position at court, without even his having passed through the subordinate gradations of office, was not likely to meet

with public approval in a country where the claims of rank and birth, and considerations of etiquette, have even now an exaggerated importance. It gave great offence at Weimar, but the Duke was not to be gainsaid, and in reply to a formal protest he justified the act in a memorandum which was as creditable to his firmness and independence of character as the appointment itself ultimately proved to be to his discrimination. Henceforth Goethe's relation towards the court-circle at Weimar was assured; and the fact that he not only easily surmounted all jealousies, but also turned his position to good account, amply justified his acceptance of it.

For the next eight years Goethe's life flowed on with apparent evenness, but with many a various mental experience. His personal mode of life was simple, as it always remained. Whilst he was still uncertain whether to stay at Weimar, the Duke had placed at his disposal a small cottage residence in the park, near to the river Ilm; and in this he lived for a long time together, sometimes shutting himself up from all intruders, at others passing a day, and even a night, with the sole companionship of the Duke. On him he did not fail to exercise a useful influence. It was through Goethe that Herder was invited to Weimar and appointed "court-preacher" and "general superintendent."

A plan for re-opening the mines at Ilmenau, and the establishment of a fire-brigade for Weimar, were amongst the practical measures which Goethe promoted. The necessity of this last improvement had been illustrated by the destruction of the theatre, which had been burnt down shortly before Goethe's arrival. The manager and his company had departed, and their loss was now only to be supplied by amateur theatricals, to which Goethe devoted himself with energy. At this period amateur acting was universally fashionable amongst the upper classes. Berlin, Dresden, Frankfort, and other smaller towns, had each its private company. At Weimar the Duke himself, the Dowager Duchess, Goethe, Musaeus, Bertuch, and others of the court circle, figured on the stage. Amongst the ladies, Corona Schröter, the accomplished actress, took the principal parts. She had been known to

Goethe at Leipsic, and by his advice she was invited to Weimar in the capacity of Hofsängerin (court-singer). Another was Amalia Kotzebue, sister of the future well-known comedy-writer. This distinguished company did not disdain to seek a public away from Weimar. They visited all the great houses of the neighbourhood, sometimes starting for the day's expedition at early morning, and taking with them their own wines and provisions in a sumpter-wagon. On one occasion they performed Einsiedel's opera, 'The Gipsies,' in the forest, the trees and woodland scenery illuminated by torches producing a powerful effect of local colouring. Farces, comedies, operas, and sometimes more ambitious works of art, were given at various times, Goethe's own inventive powers being frequently drawn upon. 'Iphigenia,' written at first in prose, was the most important of his contributions, Goethe himself acting the part of Orestes. Scenes from 'Goetz von Berlichingen' were introduced into 'The Gipsies;' 'Die Mitschuldigen' was also acted. Amongst other contributions of the lighter sort were the operetta 'Die Fischerin,' 'Die Geschwister,' 'Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit,' and the 'Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilern.'

It will be taken for granted that Goethe during the early years of court life—being then between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-four—did not escape the fascination of feminine charms. For both Corona Schröter and Amalia Kotzebue there is evidence that he felt some tenderness: but a more absorbing sentiment was to place others in the background.

The Frau von Stein has been mentioned as attached to the household of the Dowager-Duchess. Her husband was master of the horse to the Duke. She was more than six years older than Goethe, and had seven children. She nevertheless retained all the charms of a woman in the prime of life, and, without being acknowledged as handsome, possessed those fascinations of manner and temperament which put formal beauty into the shade. She was perfectly a woman of the world, with the tact which lends to experience all the charm of innocence. It must be added that her domestic life was not a happy one; for

no affection existed between her and her husband, who was seldom seen in his own house.

Within a few months of Goethe's arrival an intimate friendship had sprung up between them. Frequent notes were interchanged, and their mutual relations could not but become notorious; but, judged by the standard of prevalent morality, it was regarded as innocent and deserving of sympathy. In Goethe's share of the correspondence, extending over ten years, which has been published, we have evidence of the depth and constancy of his devotion, which the Frau von Stein well knew how to preserve by a system of alternate encouragement and repression. Many periods of sadness and dejection were thereby caused to Goethe; but however such a sentiment, which could never develop into solid and lasting happiness, may be regretted, it carried with it a discipline which to one of his peculiar temperament and habits was not wholly unproductive of good.

Amidst all temptations to luxury in living, Goethe never allowed himself to fall into habits of self-indulgence. He was fond of wine; but, as a Rhinelander, the light German wines were a stimulus to which his constitution had an innate tendency, and which he could use without hurt. To tea and coffee he strongly objected. He was an early riser, and unlike most men of his time a lover of cold water. At Weimar he learnt to swim, and would bathe in the Ilm even in the winter. Sometimes he passed the night in the open air, sleeping upon a stone bench, wrapped in a cloak.

And, whilst attending to his own physical well-being, Goethe did not, as has been often assumed, withhold his sympathy for others less fortunate than himself. In 1777 we find him taking charge of a Swiss peasant boy, who had been a protégé of his friend Baron Lindau, and who at his patron's death was left destitute. Goethe undertook to maintain him, and ultimately provided him with the means of making his livelihood. The next year his benevolence was further taxed. An unknown correspondent wrote to him, under the assumed name of Kraft, for assistance. From the history of his circumstances it appeared that he had fallen from a

respectable position into complete destitution. Goethe in reply sent him money and clothing. In the correspondence which ensued it became evident that the man was one of those morbid and suspicious natures whose misfortunes are usually of their own making, and who attribute to the world the fault that is in themselves. Goethe saw this, but did not therefore give him up. Regarding him as more to be pitied than blamed, he made provision for his living economically, and endeavoured to provide him with some occupation. He ultimately made him an allowance of 200 thalers a year, a sixth of his own official income, and continued it until the death of the man in 1785. It should be added that this was done unknown to any of his friends, and was only brought to light with the correspondence after Goethe's death.

In 1779 (on his thirtieth birthday) Goethe was raised to the full rank of Geheimrath (privy councillor), and about a fortnight later he and the Duke started for a tour in Switzerland. They stayed on their way at Frankfort, and Rath Goethe and his wife had the gratification of entertaining their distinguished son and his sovereign.

At Strasbourg, where they also halted, and where doubtless the memory of Friederike was vividly recalled to him, Goethe yielded to the impulse to see her once more, and rode over alone to Sesenheim. He was received with all kindness and cordiality: Friederike made no reproachful allusion to the past, and behaved, as he wrote to the Frau von Stein, "with such exquisite delicacy and generosity from the moment that I stood before her, unexpected, on the threshold, that I felt quite relieved. . . . The old people were frank and hearty, and thought me looking younger. I stayed the night there, and departed at dawn, leaving behind me friendly faces, so that I can now think once more of this corner of the world with comfort, and know that they are at peace with me."

He similarly set his mind at rest by visiting Lili, who was now married, and living at Strasbourg.

The tour in Switzerland is described in the 'Briefe aus der Schweiz,' which is compiled chiefly from letters which

he wrote to the Frau von Stein. On their return they visited Stuttgart and took part in the new year festival at the Military Academy, which occasion is only noticeable as being the first time that Schiller, then a successful student of twenty years of age, beheld the face of his future friend. At Frankfort they were again entertained by Frau Rath Goethe, to whom the Duke afterwards sent privately a sum of money, to recompense her for the expenses which his visit had occasioned.

By the 13th of January, 1780, they were again at Weimar.

From this period may be dated a change in Goethe's outward bearing, indicative of the gradual maturing of his mind which years were bringing about. He even became impatient of the extravagances and vagaries of the Duke, who had not yet outgrown youthful follies. The latter still treated him as an intimate friend, and made no alteration in the familiar terms of intercourse, but to Goethe it seemed proper to adopt the position, and the more formal address, demanded by court etiquette. This was done, however, without any abandonment of independence, and he did not scruple to speak candidly to, and even at times to lecture, the Duke. That the regard which each privately felt for the other was not really impaired thereby is a proof of the sound foundations upon which it was based. And whilst occupying himself seriously with official duties, Goethe also applied himself with more method than hitherto to the work of self-culture. He took an interest in all branches of science, particularly mineralogy and osteology. He renewed his studies in anatomy, under a professor at Jena, and delivered lectures to the younger students on the skeleton. His researches in osteology resulted, in the year 1783, in his important discovery of the intermaxillary bone in the human skull, the separation of which is in ordinary cases so difficult to detect that anatomists had previously denied its existence.

These pursuits, however, did not separate him from literature. 'Wilhelm Meister' had been partly written, and was making material though slow progress. An opera, 'Scherz, List und Rache,' the poem 'Die Geheimnisse,' and

many minor poems, were also composed at odd times in the seven years between 1779 and 1786.

In May 1779 his father died; and at about the same time Goethe took possession of a house in the town of Weimar, retaining the Gartenhaus in the park, where he had hitherto lived, as an occasional retreat. Shortly afterwards, in deference to the wishes of the Dowager Duchess Amalia, and of Karl August, he accepted a patent of nobility, and henceforth wrote *von* before his name. Immediately afterwards he was promoted to the office of Kammer-Präsident (president of the chamber), still retaining his seat in the Privy Council. His salary was raised by the Duke to fourteen hundred thalers, and from his father's property he received eighteen hundred a year, so that his whole certain annual income was somewhat less than £550. His means were thus comparatively ample, but not more than he could easily dispose of. In those days there was wide-spread distress amongst the lower classes, and there were pressing claims upon the benevolent. Goethe, as we have seen, was more than usually sensible of such claims; and though his own household was conducted in an exceedingly simple and economical style, it is easy to understand that he did not save money.

During these seven years his relations with the Frau von Stein grew continually more intimate, and his letters show that for a time he was free from the uncertainty and disquiet which their intercourse had formerly caused him. He treated her eldest son Fritz, a boy of ten years old, with the solicitude of a father, and for some months took him to live in his house. With him, in the autumn of 1783, he made a short journey into the Hartz, to the great advantage of his own health, which the strain of constant work had affected.

But the greater calmness which marked his outward life, the more regular work and more definite aims which occupied his attention, did not divert his thoughts from a project which he had long cherished—namely, a visit to Italy. From his childhood he had learnt to regard Italy as the fountain-head of literature and art, and of modern European culture. It had always been his father's wish

that he should visit a country which, in his own case, had furnished pleasant reminiscences and a topic of conversation to the end of his days, and the natural bent of Goethe's mind, which was in a high degree classical, gave him a constant impulse in the same direction.

In July, 1786, he accompanied the Duke, Herder, and the Frau von Stein, to Karlsbad, and the opportunity appeared to be a favourable one for carrying out his project. He imparted it only to the Duke, whose permission was necessary, and obtained an indefinite leave of absence. Herder and the Frau von Stein having returned to Weimar, he completed his preparations, and on the 4th of September, early in the morning, he left Karlsbad, travelling, as his custom was, incognito, and passing as a merchant. Having crossed the Brenner, he visited Verona, Venice, Ferrara, Florence, Perugia, and other intermediate towns, and reached Rome on the 29th of October. Here he stayed four months, chiefly studying art, and associating with German painters. In February he went to Naples, where he mixed more freely with society, and became acquainted with Sir W. Hamilton and his wife, afterwards the friend of Nelson. He visited Sicily, staying at Palermo a fortnight, and in June, 1787, returned to Rome. Here he lived for the next ten months, confining himself almost exclusively to the society of artists, amongst whom Angelica Kaufmann, Kayser, the musician, and Heinrich Meyer, the Swiss painter, with whom he formed a lifelong friendship, are specially mentioned. He spent much time in endeavours, which unfortunately were futile, to become a painter. But, though in spite of all his efforts he never overcame his natural inaptitude for the practise of art, the work was useful, in as far as it gave him, what every critic should have, a knowledge of the technical conditions under which works are produced.

But other work, which for many men would have been sufficient, occupied him. He completed and re-wrote 'Egmont,' he wrote some scenes of 'Faust,' several smaller poems, and revised those already published for a new edition of his collected works, which was now in the press. Science also claimed a share of his thoughts; and even at Palermo he occupied himself with those botanical

observations which afterwards led to his enunciation of the theory of the metamorphoses of plants.

During this long absence from Weimar he wrote constantly to the Frau von Stein, but the sort of influence which she had hitherto exercised over him was not proof against continued separation, and before his return some sentiment on his part had been evoked by the charms of a young Milanese lady. She, however, was betrothed, and, as on so many former occasions, the affair resulted in nothing more than a pleasing episode introduced in the 'Italiänische Reise.' It was, nevertheless, the occasion of resentment on the part of the Frau von Stein, whose relations with Goethe were henceforth altered.

In April he started homewards, and reached Weimar on the 18th of June, 1788.*

SECTION V.—*Schiller: Marriage.*

To many of his friends Goethe's long absence seemed to have altered him strangely. He came back outwardly colder in manner, and with a perceptible want of interest in what was passing around him. He had, in fact, gained wider experience and higher views and aims, which alienated him from the petty interests and routine of a small German court. He felt the necessity of devoting himself more exclusively to his own studies, and had written to the Duke from Rome to this effect. Karl August, who, in common with Herder and his most intimate friends, could better appreciate Goethe's intellectual requirements, generously accorded him relief from his official duties, though reserving him a place in the Privy Council whenever he chose to occupy it.

His first acquaintance with Schiller dates from a few months after his return. The latter had visited Weimar without seeing Goethe. Being essentially different in mind as in physical constitution, it is not surprising that they felt little mutual attraction. The immense popularity of 'The Robbers' was sufficient to excite against its

* The 'Italiänische Reise' gives a detailed account of this Italian tour, compiled from letters addressed to the Frau von Stein, Herder, and others, which were collected and edited by Goethe some years afterwards. See the complete translation in this series.

author a prejudice on the part of Goethe, who had long discarded and outgrown the unruly and defiant impulses which mark the motive of that piece. When Schiller, however, in 1788, was staying at Rudolstadt, Goethe was induced to visit him in company with the Frau von Stein. Schiller, who was the younger by ten years, looked up to Goethe as his superior in knowledge and genius, and in the qualities which had gained him so high a social standing; but he found him critical, dogmatic, and unsympathetic with, if not altogether intolerant of, the metaphysical ideas and Kantian speculations with which his own mind was occupied. "I doubt," he wrote, "whether we shall ever come into any close communication with each other. Much that still interests me has already had its epoch with him. His whole nature is, from its very origin, otherwise constructed than mine: his world is not my world; our modes of conceiving things appear to be essentially different. From such a combination, no secure substantial intimacy can result. Time will try."

The publication, about this time, of the first volume of Schiller's 'Revolt of the Netherlands,' gave him an improved literary standing; and it is greatly to Goethe's credit that, though he had not yet become reconciled to Schiller's principles, he interested himself in procuring for him the appointment to the vacant chair of History at the University of Jena. By this means they became neighbours, though it was still some years before any intimacy existed between them.

Goethe's relations with the Frau von Stein had become altered, as we have stated, but without any specific disagreement, during his absence in Italy. Coolness on his part, and natural dissatisfaction on hers, speedily ensued. And now another circumstance occurred, which effectually terminated their intimacy.

One day, when Goethe was walking in the park, a girl presented him with a paper containing a petition on behalf of her brother,* who was then living at Jena, and endeavouring to support himself by literary work. Her

* This brother is mentioned in Goethe's 'Annalen' (1791), as "an ever active theatrical poet" whose assistance was useful to him in bringing out new operatic works at the Weimar theatre.

name was Christiane Vulpius, and she was the daughter of a man who through intemperance had reduced himself to abject poverty, and obliged his children to leave him and make a living as they could. Christiane was small and pretty, and was still at the period, so fatal to Goethe, of early womanhood. Her appearance at once pleased him, and the acquaintance thus made led to an irregular connexion, and resulted ultimately in their marriage, though this did not take place until eighteen years afterwards. That he did not marry her at once must be attributed rather to the disparity of their positions than to the dislike of the ties of wedlock, which had undoubtedly influenced him in former cases. As one now ennobled, and holding a position of peculiar confidence at Court, such a marriage would have been a flagrant violation of all the conventional proprieties of his class. Yet Goethe, sobered and matured in mind, felt the need of a domestic life; and a marriage that would have satisfied this need, and at the same time gained public approbation, might have been hoped for by his friends. More could not be said in respect to one whose impulses, more than anyone's, were independent of the influence of general opinion.

In choosing Christiane it is possible that pity, as well as the more ardent sentiment to which it is said to be akin, had some influence on him, and that the opportunity of benefiting the family of one who interested him so deeply, finally determined the precise nature of the relations between them. That in his own mind he early assigned a valid character to their connexion, is proved by the fact that when a son was born to them a year later, he took not only Christiane, but also her mother and sister, to live in his house.*

That the great public of Weimar was scandalized is of course credible, but the offence consisted rather in the humble circumstances of Christiane than in the outrage

* A recent adverse critic of Goethe (Mr. R. H. Hutton) has done less than justice to Goethe's conduct towards Christiane. In taking her to live in his house, he married her to all intents and purposes. In his circumstances a formal marriage was practically impossible; and when the ceremony was performed, many years later, his relations towards the court were much more independent. See 'Literary Essays,' by R. H. Hutton—'Goethe and his Influence.'

on morality. To this noxious but deeply-rooted prejudice of German society, Goethe yielded so far as to postpone indefinitely the formal rite of marriage. His intimate friends, however, interpreted seriously the step which he had taken. The Duke stood godfather to his son; and his mother not only expressed herself perfectly satisfied with his choice, received Christiane as her daughter, and wrote affectionately to her, but refused to listen to the officious meddlers who tried to convince her of the scandal which the connexion occasioned.* What her mental qualities may have been can only be inferred. But the facts that the 'Roman Elegies' were written for her, and that the poem on the 'Metamorphoses of Plants' is addressed to her, indicate that she was able to appreciate his genius, and to take an intellectual interest in his scientific researches.

In 1790 Goethe went a second time to Italy, joining the Duchess Amalia and Herder in Venice. His impressions were less favourable than at his first visit, and he stayed only two or three months. Soon after his return he was summoned to Silesia by the Duke, who was in command of a regiment in the Prussian army there encamped. Goethe took no interest in military matters. He occupied himself in writing, and was glad when they returned. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to encounter shortly afterwards the more hazardous experiences of a real campaign. The revolution in France was afoot, and some of the German powers had been moved to undertake the invasion of the country in defence of the captive king and the principle of legitimacy.

Goethe, who had little political feeling, sympathized neither with the revolution nor the threatened monarch; but his strong personal regard for the Duke led him into the field with the armies of Prussia and Brunswick. They invaded France in August, 1792, but met with a more determined resistance than they had reckoned on, and their first successes were followed by the repulse at Valmy. They found that the whole nation was against them; and being without stores, magazines, or basis of operations, were forced to make a retreat. Goethe shared in all the hardships of camp-life; and with a characteristic zeal for practical experiment, he placed himself, on one

* Lewes's 'Goethe,' 2nd ed. p. 319.

occasion, in an exposed situation over which balls and bullets were flying, in order to observe the peculiar effect on the nerves of untried soldiers commonly known as "cannon-fever."

Varens, Mainz, and other towns, having fallen into the hands of the revolutionary army, the campaign was renewed in the following year; and, after a regular siege, Mainz was recaptured. Of this operation Goethe wrote a detailed account. Between these two campaigns he had returned to Weimar; and to the pleasure of seeing his friends again was added that of finding that during his absence his house in the Frauenplan had, by the Duke's orders, been rebuilt. It was arranged on what was for Weimar a magnificent scale, and being still incomplete was finished under his own supervision.

The leisure which he had gained by his freedom from official duties, was in a great measure devoted to science. He pursued such studies diligently, and not merely as a *dilettante;* and the two important discoveries relating to the morphology of animals and plants were the result of careful observation, supplemented by that imaginative capacity which marks the scientific no less than the purely literary genius. These discoveries have secured him a high place in the history of science; but it is therefore all the more necessary to record the fact, that some of his investigations were less fortunate. The silence and indifference with which his former observations had been treated by professed scientific men, gave him a contempt for diplomas and formal guarantees of knowledge, and led him into the error of undervaluing all men of science. The result of this was shown in his investigations on the theory of colour. Starting with mistaken notions of the Newtonian theory of the compound nature of light, he set himself to refute Newton, and to prove what seemed to him almost a self-evident fact, that pure light is a simple phenomenon, and that certain colours are derived from it by the interposition of various turbid media; other colours, he thought, were obtained by the interposition of transparent media over darkness. So that, according to his theory, there exist two absolute phenomena, light and darkness: and the whole of the tints in the spectrum are

obtained through the modification of these two "positives" by the qualifying media or "opaques."

There is a great deal of consistency in his theory; and for several years he continued to collect facts which appear to support it. Many of the experiments in his 'Farbenlehre,' in which the theory was ultimately enunciated, are very interesting, and even instructive, to such as may be studying colour from an æsthetic rather than a scientific point of view. It is also to be remembered that in days when chemistry was still in its infancy, the Newtonian theory was far from possessing the same degree of plausibility that it has now, when the fundamental ideas of chemical analysis are familiar to children at school. For this reason Goethe's theory gained support amongst literary men and philosophers, such as Schelling and Hegel, but none whatever amongst physicists. The use of mathematics, of which Goethe was completely ignorant, but which enter largely into all Newtonian demonstrations, prejudiced him more against the received theory. He looked upon it as an attempt to persuade him against the evidence of his senses by the use of artificial formulas, which had no contact with physical nature: and his inability in this matter to contend with scientific men on their own ground, probably embittered his opposition to them. In botany and osteology he had felt that his discoveries completely declared themselves, and that blindness alone prevented their being at once accepted; opposition therefore did not irritate him. In respect to colour-theories, he and his enemies stood on different ground: he had to overcome not merely dull opposition, but a powerful counter-demonstration, which he had no means of meeting. It is possible that a vague feeling of insecurity in his position increased his irritation. He even attributed insincerity to Newton, and handled his followers still more harshly. Both his theory, and his treatment of the subject show him in an unfavourable light, and have tended to depreciate the really great services which he rendered to science.*

* These remarks on the 'Farbenlehre' are mainly derived from Lewes's 'Life of Goethe,' and Prof. Tyndall's article on the subject in the 'Fortnightly Review,' vol. xxvii.

Though, as we have stated, Goethe had been instrumental in bringing Schiller to Weimar, they had for six years lived within a few miles of each other without any but occasional and formal intercourse. In 1794, however, they were suddenly brought into closer relations. Schiller had formed the design of issuing a monthly periodical, to be entitled 'Die Horen' (The Hours), in the production of which he hoped to unite the leading literary men of Germany, and to exercise a beneficial influence on the public taste of the day in literature and art. He wrote a formal letter to Goethe, enclosing the prospectus, and asking for his co-operation. Goethe sent him an encouraging answer, and the correspondence so commenced was not allowed to drop: it drew them rapidly into more intimate relations, and laid the foundation of a lasting friendship. The apparent difference of principles which had hitherto held them apart, faded into unimportance, if not nonentity, under the strong personal sympathy of two men who were both actuated by high objects; and the productive association in aims and in practical work which ensued is one of the most striking episodes in literary history.

Schiller's experiment failed to effect the objects with which it started. It was adversely criticised by the literary men who did not happen to be connected with it, and was commercially a failure. Its ill-success prompted Goethe and Schiller to take vengeance on the literary public by a series of epigrams, which they called 'Xenien,' from the 'Xenia' of Martial. In these, not only their avowed literary opponents, but all other writers of the day, whether pedants, pretenders, or sentimentalists, who failed to satisfy their standards of art, were unsparingly satirized and ridiculed. The appearance of these in the 'Musen-Almanach,' a yearly publication of Schiller's, created a small storm amongst literary men, and called forth an amount of controversy and acrid writing which made the period of their publication long memorable.

'Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre' (Apprenticeship) was completed and published in 1795. It was read by Schiller in MS., book by book, and he made various suggestions as to the details of its development. It excited his warmest enthusiasm; and towards its conclusion he

wrote—"It is one of the greatest blessings of my existence that I have lived to see this work of yours completed—that it has been written while my faculties are still in a state of growth, and that I may draw inspiration from this pure source. Further, the beautiful relation that exists between us makes it seem to me a kind of religious duty to make your cause my own, and so to develop all that is real in my nature, that my mind may become the clearest mirror of that which exists beneath this covering, and that I may deserve the name of being your friend in the higher sense of the word. . . . Calm and deep, clear and yet incomprehensible, like nature, your work makes its influence felt. It stands there, and even the smallest secondary incident shows the beautiful equanimity from which all has emanated." We here see the attitude, almost as of a disciple, which Schiller assumed towards his friend, who, it must be remembered, was his senior by ten years, and the acknowledged chief in German letters. Yet he did not abstain from offering suggestions and corrections, and Goethe readily acknowledged himself to be influenced by him. "I thank you sincerely," writes the latter, "for your refreshing letter, and for communicating to me what you feel and think about my novel, more especially about the eighth book. If it accords with your mind, you cannot fail to see your own influence in it; for I should certainly never have been able to finish it—at least, not in the way it is done—had it not been for the friendly relation which subsists between us. A hundred times when I was talking to you about theory and practice, my mind was dwelling upon the situations which you have now lying before you, and I was silently judging them according to the principles upon which we were agreed. . . . Pray continue to make me acquainted with my own work: I have already in thought worked out many of your suggestions." *

In all the works on which they were both engaged about this time, the same friendly co-operation took place.

* See letters 181 and 186 of 'Schiller's Correspondence with Goethe,' which was published by the latter after Schiller's death and which gives a vivid illustration of their friendship. It has been translated by Miss L. D. Schmitz, for Bohn's Standard Library.

Of Goethe's the chief were 'Hermann und Dorothea,' published in 1797, and portions of 'Faust,' at which he worked at intervals, whilst he cordially encouraged Schiller in the composition of 'Wilhelm Tell' and 'Wallenstein.' To the same period are assigned most of the fine ballads which have done so much to widen the popularity of both writers, whilst they have added a new and striking department to German literature. Another common ground of interest was the theatre. As early as 1784 the amateur theatre which had afforded the court so much occupation during Goethe's early residence at Weimar, had been superseded by a professional company. In 1790 a new theatre had been built, and the management entrusted to Goethe. All expenses were paid by the Court, and Goethe had liberty to act as he liked. He used his power autocratically, and being independent of the public approbation, acted on the principle of doing what he thought best for the improvement rather than the gratification of the public taste. Versions of Shakspere's 'King John' and 'Henry IV.,' his own 'Clavigo, 'Gross Kophta,' &c., were given. The public might attend or stay away as it pleased, and any expression of feeling was discouraged. Sometimes, it is said, when Jena students ventured to signify their opinion too demonstratively, Goethe would rise in his place and command silence.

Schiller was not opposed to this plan of management; though it is strange that so great a dramatic writer should agree with Goethe (who also knew well enough the requirements of an audience *) in an arbitrary system of theatrical direction which, by depriving the actors of their principal stimulus, could not fail to have a prejudicial effect on the acting, and so stultify their own efforts towards the improvement of the stage. However, Schiller's close association with Goethe in these theatrical interests was of great use to him in the composition of his masterpiece, the trilogy of 'Wallenstein,' which, under Goethe's hearty encouragement, rapidly approached com-

* See the theatre prologue to 'Faust,' in which the Merry Andrew is made to take the line of the common-sense critic, in opposition to the poet and the stage manager.

pletion. The first portion of it was produced at Weimar in January, 1799, and the result was universally recognised as a veritable triumph. Shortly afterwards Schiller, by the advice of his physician, removed to Weimar; and the generosity of the Duke enabled him to do this without pecuniary loss. Henceforth he lived in the closest intimacy with Goethe; and his freedom from professional duties was during the next six years turned to account in the rapid production of his four last plays, 'Maria Stuart,' 'Die Jungfrau von Orleans,' 'Die Braut von Messina,' and 'Wilhelm Tell.' The last was a worthy termination of his life's work, for his weakly constitution was now strained to its utmost. He had long been consumptive, and subject to other organic maladies, and in April 1806 a sudden chill caught at the theatre brought on an attack which in a few days proved fatal. He died on May 8th.

Goethe himself was ill at the time, and those who were about him refrained from telling him the news. Meyer the artist, his intimate friend, who was with him, left the house lest his grief might escape him. Goetho divined something of the fact, and said, at last, "I see Schiller must be very ill." "That night they overheard him—the serene man, who seemed almost above human affection, who disdained to reveal to others whatever grief he felt when his son died—they overheard Goethe weep! In the morning he said to a friend, 'Is it not true that Schiller was very ill yesterday?' The friend (it was a woman) sobbed. 'He is dead,' said Goethe faintly. 'You have said it,' was the answer. 'He is dead!' repeated Goethe, and covered his eyes with his hands."*

For some time after Schiller's death Goethe was capable of little work. He had recently completed the first part of 'Faust,' on which he had worked at intervals for thirty years, but it was not sent to press at once. For important political events were now taking place, and the next year (1806) was full of grievous disasters for Weimar and the whole of north Germany. To Goethe politics were of slight importance, provided that they did not interfere with the studies and work in which his true vocation

* Lord Lytton's 'Life of Schiller.' Misc. Works, i. 483.

lay: but they now forced themselves upon him with a ruthless violence before which art and science fell prostrate. The bruit of battle was heard in Weimar, and the Prussian fugitives from Jena fled through the town, shortly to be followed by Napoleon himself. Weimar itself was cannonaded, and in the pillage which followed many houses were fired or ransacked. Goethe's had been selected as the headquarters of the French general Augereau, and owing to this his books and MSS. escaped destruction. But before his arrival it was visited by troopers, who drank Goethe's wine and even burst into his bedchamber. Only his coolness and Christiane's courage prevented the matter from becoming more serious.*

Five days later, namely, on the 19th of October, Goethe and Christiane Vulpius were formally married. There is no evidence of the motives which prompted him to take this step at such a time; but it may well be imagined that it was one which had been long contemplated, and that Goethe, with a sort of weakness which is too common to be construed harshly, had deferred it from year to year, until at last this calamitous disturbance to the ordinary current of their lives gave the needful stimulus to his will. This consummation of a *mésalliance* already condemned caused a renewed scandal in Weimar society, but Goethe's best friends were disposed to congratulate him upon having at last emerged from a false position. It was known to them that his domestic life had long been a source of unhappiness to him. That Christiane should be admitted to the higher social circle in which he lived was in any circumstances impossible and could not reasonably distress him; but the natural deterioration in her personal attractions had been painfully accelerated by a constitutional tendency to the use of stimulants, which her isolated position probably aggravated. To give her up, however, was out of the question; she was a faithful companion to him, and the mother of his child. By marrying her he fulfilled a plain duty—providing her with an incentive to self-control, and, according to German law, giving his son a legitimate position.

* The events of these days will be found detailed in Keil's 'Goethe, Weimar und Jena im Jahre 1806. Leipzig, 1882.'

The Duke of Weimar had fought with the Prussian army. At the command of the King of Prussia he now submitted to Napoleon, and returned to his capital. During the quiet which ensued Goethe printed his 'Faust,' and also the 'Farbenlehre,' the MS. of which had been a source of the greatest anxiety to him during the French occupation.

Napoleon was again at Weimar in the autumn of 1808, on the more peaceful occasion of the Congress of Erfurt. Goethe was a witness of the festivities of which the latter town was the scene, and had a personal interview with the great conqueror. He was summoned to an audience on the 2nd of October and found him at breakfast. Napoleon looked at him steadily, and remarked—"Vous êtes un homme." He then commenced a conversation on Goethe's writings, speaking especially of 'Werther,' which he had read seven times. After an interview of nearly an hour, during which he invited him to come to Paris, he dismissed him graciously, repeating as he went his laconic commendation—"Voilà un homme."

SECTION VI.—*Old Age: Conclusion.*

Goethe was now in his sixtieth year, when in most men the period of old age may be said to have commenced. His literary achievements culminated with the publication of the first part of 'Faust;' and though his life continued as full of activity as it had ever been, the literary works which he henceforth produced comprise none of those by which his name has become so widely known. But except for this fact there was no indication of diminution in mental or physical strength; and his constant youthfulness of heart is shown by nothing more clearly than his continual susceptibility to the influence of feminine attractions.

Of his supposed relations with Bettine Brentano, afterwards von Arnim,* we need say little, because they are inferred solely from her published 'Correspondence of Goethe

* Bettine (Elizabeth) was the daughter of his old friend Maximiliane Brentano (*née* von Laroche), and a favourite of his mother's. She came to Weimar in 1807, and again after her marriage in 1811, when she quarrelled with Goethe's wife and was forbidden his house.

with a Child,' a book which has been clearly shown to be altogether untrustworthy. It proves no more than that a good-looking, impulsive, and eccentric girl forced her friendship on Goethe (who tolerated it only until it became troublesome to him), and then concocted a series of letters, for the most part if not wholly fictitious, which she published, without any corroboration, as having been written by him to her.*

Another young girl, however, by name Minna Herzlieb, undoubtedly made for a time an impression on his heart. She was the adopted daughter of a bookseller at Jena, and was much noticed by Goethe as a child. As she grew to womanhood his feeling for her increased in intensity, and like other previous attachments, it has left its traces in his works. For her he wrote a series of sonnets, one of the finest groups of his minor poems; she too is the prototype of Ottilie, the heroine of his novel 'Wahlverwandtschaften' (Elective Affinities): and the serious nature of the emotions which agitated him may be inferred from this curious analysis of the conflict between the force of circumstances and impulses which, according to his theory, may be beyond the control of reason and duty. At length Minna was sent away from home, and she ultimately married.

Of the remaining years of Goethe's life much that is interesting might be said, were it possible here to chronicle in detail all the projects and results of an ever-busy mind. His chief works are his autobiography, 'Wahrheit und Dichtung,' which he commenced in 1810; the 'Westöstliche Divan,'† written in 1814; 'Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre' (1821), and the second part of 'Faust,' which occupied the very close of his life. For twelve years (1816–1828) he conducted a serial publication, 'Kunst und Alterthum' (Art and Antiquity), in which the direc-

* The story does not require any further comment. It is set forth and completely disposed of by Mr. Lewes in his 'Life of Goethe,' 2nd ed., book vii. ch. iii.

† The original of *Suleika* was Marianne von Willemer, the gifted wife of a Frankfort citizen of note. For both her and her husband Goethe entertained a cordial affection and respect, and their interesting correspondence, extending over a period of twenty-four years, has lately been published (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1878).

tion of his varied studies on ancient and mediæval art was periodically reflected. His conversations, published by Eckermann (a young man of humble birth whom he had befriended, thereby earning his enthusiastic devotion), give an interesting picture of his ordinary life and studies, and show his eager attention to everything of interest relating to natural science or art that came under his observation.

It was inevitable that his later years should be frequently clouded over by the death of old friends. The Duchess Amalia had died in 1807, whilst north Germany was still suffering under French invasion. Her old protégé, Wieland, survived her for six years. Goethe's mother, who more than once had been invited by her son to come and live with him at Weimar, but who preferred the familiar burgher-life in which she had spent her days, died in 1808 in her 78th year, regretted and respected by many of her son's friends, whose esteem she had on her own account gained. Herder, for whom Goethe had always entertained the highest opinion, notwithstanding some estrangement which his jealousy of Schiller occasioned, had died in 1803.

The death of Goethe's wife in 1816 was, as may be supposed, a still greater shock to the current of his daily existence. It is true, as has been stated above, that the course of their domestic life had not been untroubled. Nevertheless she had shown a true affection for him, and been his companion for twenty-eight years, and when the news of her illness recalled him from Jena, where he was then living, all his tenderness was reawakened. He knelt, we are told, by her death-bed, and seizing her hands said, "Thou wilt not forsake me; thou must not forsake me."*

This break in his domestic life was in a measure compensated for by the marriage of his son in the next year with Ottilie von Pogwisch, a brilliant member of the Weimar court. She was a favourite of her father-in-law, and henceforth took the management of his household.

Even in his seventy-fourth year Goethe had not out-

* Preface to Meyer's 'Correspondence.'

grown his capacity for sentimental attachments. In 1823 he met at Marienbad a young Bohemian lady, a certain Fräulein von Lewezow, for whom he conceived an impulsive passion, which was in some degree returned by her. He wished to marry her; but the prudence of the lady, who thought the difference of years too great, assisted probably by his timely flight from her society, saved him from so hazardous a venture.*

The year 1825 was the occasion of a double jubilee in Weimar. The fiftieth anniversary of the accession of the Grand Duke, as he was now styled, for Saxe-Weimar was made a Grand-Duchy in 1816, had been celebrated but a few weeks when a similar festival was held to commemorate that of Goethe's arrival at Weimar. A musical greeting was prepared for him in the morning; and later in the day the court and all his friends in the town, and deputations from the neighbourhood, met at his house to congratulate him. A large banquet was given in the Stadthaus; 'Iphigenia' was performed in the theatre; and at night the houses in the Frauenplan were illuminated.

But, in little more than eighteen months, the Grand Duke, his friend and companion for fifty years, was no more, and so the last close tie which bound his old age with the joyous days of youth was severed.

Goethe, as his custom was, sought distraction in work, and in these latest years was completed the second part of 'Faust.' And the isolation in which he was left was mitigated by the knowledge that his name gained daily a wider influence, and that in England and France he had the respectful admiration of all who knew his works and whose esteem was valuable. He was always glad to see Englishmen; and Thackeray, who visited Weimar as a youth in 1830, has given an interesting note of him at this period. Old age dealt very gently with Goethe: though his hearing became defective, his eyesight remained unimpaired; and, whilst his memory became somewhat untrustworthy, his intellect retained its keenness.

The last great sorrow of his life was the premature

* Ulrike von Lewezow was said to be still living in 1879. See J. Frese's German translation of 'Lewes's Life,' 12th edition.

death of his son, who was struck down by fever during a tour in Italy, and died in Rome, 27 October, 1830.*

The closing scene of Goethe's life was a short one. On the 15th of March, 1832, he took a sudden chill in going out of his heated room, from which a slight fever ensued. No danger was seriously apprehended until the morning of the 20th, when signs of approaching death suddenly became evident. He rallied, however, and on the 22nd tried to walk—sat up, and talked with his daughter-in-law. Soon, however, his mind began to wander. Seeing a piece of paper on the floor, he asked why they left Schiller's letters lying about. Little by little, speech became more difficult and incoherent. He spoke at last only by signs made in the air or, when strength failed his arm, on his lap. At half-past eleven the dying man settled himself in the corner of his arm-chair and fell into a gentle sleep. It was long before the bystanders could resign themselves to the knowledge that Goethe was taken away from them and from the world.†

What the world owes to him has been but faintly indicated in the foregoing pages, which have dealt mainly with the earlier portion of his life—the period of growth towards the fuller development to which his numerous works testify better than any formal record. Yet the details of his life are well worth study: his fame as an imaginative writer is not likely to be dimmed by any lapse of time; the high value of some of his scientific investigations must preserve for him a place in the history of science; but the actual ascendency that he enjoyed amongst his contemporaries can only be fully appreciated by the reader of the numerous letters and papers in which his private and personal character is best displayed. In them, amidst all the trivial details of familiar correspon-

* Information concerning Goethe's son may be found in Holtei's 'Vierzig Jahre' (Berlin, 3rd ed., 1864), and Eitner's essay on 'Crabb Robinson's Diary' (Weimar, 1871). The facts of his death are summarized in the *Spectator* (Nov. 10th, 1877), in a review of the 'Correspondence between Goethe and Marianne von Willemer,' edited by Th. Creizenach (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1878), *q. v.* p. 291.

† Viehoff's 'Life of Goethe.' See also Düntzer; and especially a letter from Eckermann in 'Goethe und Marianne von Willemer,' p. 327.

dence, we constantly trace the higher aims that even in early years formed the undercurrent of his life. In the letters that follow, we see perhaps more plainly his amiable and sympathetic nature, his tolerance and freedom from pride; these, it is true are excellences which may have been shared by many whose lives have been in other respects less criticised, but only because they were less exposed to criticism. Goethe no doubt had his faults, which have been brought into undue prominence by his greatness. But, as his life matured, we trace more and more plainly his eagerness in the pursuit of knowledge and in the mastery of Nature's secrets, which, combined with the highest faculties for acquiring and imparting knowledge, and an innate impulse to fulfil worthily the high behests that his nature laid on him, elevated him above his fellows. Thus, amid and in spite of all the turbulent impulses of youth, the distractions of an ardent temperament, the hindrances of official and ceremonious surroundings, he strove steadily upwards towards higher levels of knowledge and wisdom, and, like the star that was his chosen emblem, mounted "unhasting, unresting," to the serene firmament from which his spirit shines as a beacon on the path of human progress.

EARLY AND MISCELLANEOUS

LETTERS OF J. W. GOETHE.

1.—To Ludwig Ysenburg von Buri,* Neuhof.

Frankfort, 23 May, 1764.

Wohlgebohrner, insonders Hochzuehrender Herr,†

Ew. Wohlgebohrn will wonder when a stranger ventures to prefer a request to you. Yet you might kindly refrain from astonishment at all those who recognize your merits. For you may well be assured that your character itself has the power of making hearts your own in lands still more distant than where I live.

You see from my opening that for the time I am concerned for nothing but your acquaintance, until you prove whether I am worthy of being your friend and joining your Society.

Do not be displeased with my boldness, and forgive me for it; I cannot act otherwise, for were I to remain longer silent, and admire your great qualities in secret as I have hitherto done, it would cause me the greatest regret in the world. None of my friends who know you are willing to grant me this inestimable pleasure. Perhaps a little envy may be answerable for this. But there just occurs to me the best reason: they are not willing to bring to your acquaintance any person who has my failing, lest by that means you should be made responsible for it. You, honoured sir, will know that we are glad to conceal our shortcomings when we seek to gain access to a person whom we respect. But I have this in common with the

* Of Offenbach, near Frankfort, the author of some poems entitled *Harfenklängen*, etc. He is not mentioned in the *Autobiography*, but is referred to in a letter to Frau v. Laroche, dated March 21, 1775, *q. v.* This letter refers to a juvenile society called the *Arcadische Gesellschaft* of which Von Buri was "Archon." He was two years older than Goethe, who was now nearly fifteen. See Düntzer.

† These German complimentary phrases cannot be adequatel translated. This juvenile effusion and the next seem to have bee modelled on some of Rabener's satirical compositions.

wooer in Raabener,* that I declare my faults beforehand. I know, indeed, that my chattering will be tedious to you, yet it can't be helped; you must have experience of it some time, either before or after we become acquainted. One of my chief faults is that I am somewhat impetuous. You know, I dare say, what the choleric temperament is; on the other hand no one forgets an injury more easily than I. Moreover I am very much given to laying down the law, yet when I have nothing to say I can let things alone. But I will gladly place myself under discipline if it is carried out as one may expect from your discernment. At the very beginning of my letter you will find my third fault, namely, that I write as familiarly to you as if I had already known you a hundred years; but what of that? this is simply a thing that I cannot unlearn. I hope that your mind, that does not tie itself to trifles like etiquette, will forgive me for it; but be assured that I will never leave due respect out of sight.

One thing more occurs to me; I have also this fault in common with the above-mentioned person, that I am very impatient, and do not like to remain long in uncertainty. I beg you to come to a decision as quickly as possible.

These are my principal faults. Your sharp-sighted eyes will detect a hundred small ones in me, which, however, as I hope, will not put me beyond your favour, but everything will speak for me; and my faults as well as my zeal will show you that I am and constantly will remain your † most devoted servant,

JOH. WOLFGANG GOETHE.

P.S. Should you be in doubt about my age, I may say for your satisfaction that my years ‡ are about the same as those of *Alexis*.§ I complain of him very much, in that hitherto he has from day to day put off introducing me to your acquaintance. If you are good enough, as I hope and most earnestly request you, to honour me with a reply, be so kind as to put my Christian name upon the address. I live in the great *Hirsch-Grabe*. Farewell.

* Concerning G. W. Rabener, the satirist (1714–1771) cf. *Autobiog.*, bk. vii. (tr. i. 220.)

† The titles of address are the same as at the beginning.

‡ He was fifteen years old.

§ The name in the Society of his friend Schweitzer.

2. To L. Ysenburg von Buri.

Sir, Frankfort, 2 June, 1764.

I will reserve all my delight and all my joy until I have the honour of seeing you, for my pen is not capable of expressing it. You are altogether too kind to me, in that you give me such speedy hope of being acquainted with you, when I believed that this good fortune was so far distant from me. I am very much indebted to you therefor.

Alexis is one of my best friends. He can tell you enough from personal experience. I have enjoined him to impart all simply needful facts. He must omit none of my faults, but also not be silent about what is good in me. But, with all that, I request that you will give yourself the trouble to put me to the proof; for sensible as Alexis is withal, something might still remain concealed from him, that might be displeasing to you. I am somewhat like a chameleon. Then is my Alexis to be blamed if he has not regarded me from all points of view? Enough of this.

You may set yourself to disclaim as you will, you still betray yourself quickly enough. You disown perfections, and in the very same moment they shine in your actions.

Your prudence is laudable. Far from its offending me, it is, the rather, pleasing to me, and in fact contributes perhaps to my credit. Were your society of such a nature that every one who proposed could enter it without scrutiny, merely by introducing himself, it would at once be the greatest piece of stupidity; could this be an honour for me? Oh, no! But since you first choose, test, and scrutinize, this tends to the greatest pleasure for me, if you will indeed still accept me. You compare yourself with the *Herrn von Abgrund*, but this comparison is false, and in fact very false. If you go over the whole character and hold yourself in contrast, you will do nothing but find points which do not agree with one another. He makes a secret out of an affair which is not one; and is distrustful in the most exaggerated degree, but you are so with reason. That your prudence is not in the least exaggerated I will prove by an example.

We have many blockheads in our town, as you without doubt will know very well. Suppose, now, that it occurred to such a one to make your acquaintance. He requests his tutor to compose a letter; and it must be a most agreeable letter. He does so, and the young gentleman sets his name to it. By that means you acquire a high idea of his learning, and take him up without examination; but when you look at him in the light, you find that instead of a well-instructed man, your acquaintance has been augmented by a calf's-head.

That is undeniable! Now it is quite possible that I am such a one; thus your prudence is well applied.

On this occasion I write nothing more, except only the most confident assurance that I am and will always remain, sir, your most devoted servant,

JOH. WOLFGANG GOETHE.

3.—TO JOHN JACOB RIESE,* FRANKFORT.

Leipsic, 20 October, 1765, Six A.M.

RIESE, Good morning!

RIESE, Good evening! 21st, Five P.M.

I had hardly seated myself yesterday to devote an hour to you, when suddenly a letter reached me from Horn, and tore me away from the sheet I had already commenced. To-day, too, I shall not remain with you much longer. I am going to the play. There are excellent ones here. But yet!

* John Jacob Riese, a native of Frankfort, and a young friend of Goethe, studied [at the *Hochschule*] in Marburg, whilst the latter was in Leipsic. On Goethe's return to Frankfort he continued in intimate relations with Riese (see *Sulpiz Boisserée*, vol. ii. p. 250, also *Autobiog.*, bk. xii.) A portrait of him taken in black chalk by the hand of Goethe, of life-size, is now in the possession of his nephew, Herr J. Riese, of Frankfort. Of Goethe's letters to him there remain unfortunately only two of a later date, and these college letters, made known by H. König's facsimiles in Lewald's *Europa* (1837, vol. i. p. 145), from which we have printed them.—O. J.

The abrupt style in which some of the following letters are written is obvious, but it may also be stated that the spelling is often unconventional, and, as would be said of English, provincial. With regard to Goethe's speech at this period, when he commenced residence as a student at Leipsic, see *Autobiog.* bk. vi. (translation, i. 210–11).

I am undecided! Shall I stay with you? Shall I go to the play? I don't know! Quick! Let the dice decide. But I have no dice! I am going! Good-bye.

Yet wait! I will stay. To-morrow I can't again, for there's lecture to attend, visits to pay, and an evening engagement. So I will write now. Let me know what sort of life you are leading. Whether you often think of me. What your professors are like, *et cetera*, and mind, a long *et cetera*. I am living here like—like—I don't know what like; yet something

> Like to a bird that rocks upon a bough
> In loveliest grove, and breathes forth liberty;
> Who undisturbed enjoys the gentle breeze,
> And with his little wings from tree to tree,
> From bush to bush flits warbling here and there.

In short, picture to yourself a bird on a green bough, revelling in joy, and you have my life. To-day I have begun my classes.

What are they? Is it worth the trouble to ask? *Institutiones Imperiales*, *Historiam Juris*, *Pandectas*, and a *privatissimum* on the first seven and last seven chapters of the *Codex*. That's enough; the rest in fact is forgotten. No, your most obedient, that we had best drop, by the way. But, seriously: I have to-day attended two lectures, one by Professor Böhmer, on the History of States, the other by Ernesti, on Cicero's *De Oratore*. That was doing pretty well, was it not? Next week begins *Collegium philosophicum et mathematicum*.

I have not yet seen Gottsched. He has married again. A Lieutenant-Colonel's daughter *; but you know of it. She is nineteen and he sixty-five years old. She, four feet high, and he seven. She is as thin as a herring, and he as fat as a feather-sack. I am making a great figure here. But as yet I am no dandy. Nor will I become one. I need skill to be industrious. In society, concert, the theatre, dinners, suppers, and drives, so much is going on just now Ha! it is capital! It *is* capital, and costs capital too. The deuce! my purse feels it! What, ho! Rescue!

* Gottsched's second wife, Ernestine Susanne Katharine Neuenes, was the daughter of a lieut.-colonel of Gotha. The marriage took place on Aug. 1, 1765.—O. J.

Stop! Don't you see them still fly? 'There went two louis d'or. Help! there's another. Heavens! another couple already! Groschens here are like kreuzers with you in the Empire. And still one may live cheaply here. The fair is going on here. I shall live in quite a careful style. I hope with 300 thalers—what am I saying?—with 200 thalers a year, to make both ends meet. N.B.—Not including that already gone to the devil. My board is expensive. Just look at our bill of fare,—fowls, geese, turkeys, ducks, partridge, snipe, grouse, trout, hares, venison, pike, pheasants, oysters, &c. All this daily; nothing of other vulgar meats, *ut sunt*, beef, veal, mutton, and so forth; I have forgotton how they taste. And this sumptuousness is not dear—by no means dear. I see, however, that my sheet is almost full, and no verses on it, although I had intended giving you some. Another time. Tell Kehr that I shall write to him. I hear from Horn that you are complaining *ob absentiam puellarum forma elegantium*. Ask him to tell you the opinion I pronounced of you. GOETHE.

4.—To RIESE.

DEAR RIESE, Leipsic, 30 October, 1765.

Your letter of the 27th, which has given me much pleasure, has just reached me. The assurance of your affection towards me, and of your regret at my being at a distance from you, would have caused me more satisfaction had it not been expressed in so formal a tone. *Sie! sie!* * sounds so unbearable in my ears, especially from my dearest friends, that I cannot say it. Horn did it too. I have taken him to task about it. I have almost a mind to take you to task too. Yet! *Transeat!* Only if you venture to repeat it——

I am living here quite contented. You might see that from the enclosed letter, which has been some time written; you would have had it long ago, had not Horn forgotten to send me your address. The description of Marburg is really comic.

* The German custom of using the singular pronoun *Du*, thou, in addressing an intimate friend, is probably known to the reader. The plural *Sie*, you, is more formal.

I did not again see the best of tragedy-maidens. Should you not ascertain before your departure what she thinks of Belshazzar my fate remains undecided. Little is wanting to complete the fifth act. In iambics of five feet:—

The metre which yon maiden most did please,
Whom only I, O friend! desired to please,
The metre which the learned Schlegel's* self
And critics generally for tragedy
Esteem the most convenient and apt;
The metre which to most men sounds not well,
Whose ears to Alexandrines of six feet
Are still accustomed; this it is, my friend,
That I have chosen for my tragedy
To end with. But, why write so much thereof?
For many a time and oft your ears, my friend,
Have rung again by reason of my verses;
Somewhat more pleasing let me tell to you.
Gellert† I have beheld, and Gottsched too,
And hasten now to picture them to you:

Gottsched,‡ a man so big, as if of that lineage ancient,
That which, taking its rise in Gath, in the Philistine country,
Came down into the plain to the dread of the children of Israel,
Yea, his aspect is such, and in height his bodily stature
Is quite—he said it himself—six feet of Parisian measure.
If I wished to describe him aright, there were need of a pattern
Whereto I might compare you his frame; yet this would be fruitless.
Were you to wander, my friend, from one land unto another,
From the sun's uprising even unto its descending,
Yet would'st thou not find one who had any likeness to Gottsched.

* Johann Heinrich Schlegel.

† Christian F. Gellert, the celebrated poet, then professor of philosophy, see *Autobiog.*, bk. vi.

‡ An amusing account of this visit to Gottsched is given in the 7th book of the *Autobiography*.

Long have I thought thereon and at last the means have discovered
Whereby him to depict, yet laugh at me not, my beloved.

Humano capiti, cervicem jungens equinam
Derisus a Flacco non sine jure fuit.
Hinc ego Kölbeliis imponens pedibus magnis,
Immane corpus crassasque scalpulas Augusti[a],
Et magna, magni, brachiaque manusque Rolandi,
Addensque tumidum morosi Rostii[b] *caput.*
Ridebor forsan? Ne rideatis amici.

Of this great man this is the truthful counterpart,
As well as pattern-wise I can the same impart;
Now take, beloved friend, the fragment that I write,
And Gottsched, take my word, will rise up to your sight.
This great man did I see upon the dais stand,
I heard the words he spake, and you must understand
His style of speech is good; his sentences are fluent
As is the limpid brook. He stands a very giant
Upon the rostrum high, and were he still unknown
One soon would recognize his ever boastful tone;
Enough; for long of his collections he discours'd,
How much he'd spent on this and how much that had cost

—besides many other matters,—suffice it, my friend; I must close. You know he has a wife. He has married again, the old goat! All Leipsic despises him. Nobody associates with him.

Apropos. Have you not heard that the Hofrath complains of the want of lasses in Göttingen?

What will he with a maiden?
To keep in constant use the terms of rhetoric,
And in the newest style to love right Hübner-like,*

[a] You must know him—the fat chimney-sweeper.
[b] You cannot have forgotten the fox's † father.

* Johann Hübner, the well-known geographer and historian, wrote also *Oratorical Enquiries* (Fragen aus der Oratorie, Leipzig, 1726–30, 5 vols.).—O. J.

† *Fuchs* (fox) is the name applied in a German university to a new student or "freshman."

To see if Protasis a stony heart may move,
To see if one, by rules, may reach the goal of love,
To see if Mimesis, or Ploce, or Sarcasms
Possess attractions rich as Neukirch's pleonasms;*
Or, when he Ulfo sings, whether the sounding strain
Of verse Corvinian † a maiden's heart may gain;
Or whether,—but my sheet is full and I must end
To maidens of my town and Kehr my love I send.

6 Nov., 1765. GOETHE.

5.—To RIESE.

DEAR RIESE, Leipsic, 28 April, 1766.

It is long since I have written to you. Pray forgive me. Do not ask for the reason. I certainly cannot plead full engagements. You live contented in M[arburg], I even so here. Lonely—lonely—altogether lonely. Dearest Riese, this loneliness has impressed my soul with a certain sadness.

This solitary joy is mine
When far apart from all mankind,
By shady brook-side to recline
And keep my loved ones in my mind.

Still, although well content, I feel all the wants of social life. I sigh for my friends and my sweethearts, and when I feel that I sigh in vain,

Then is my heart with sorrow filled,
Sad is mine eye;
The flooded brook now rages by,
That heretofore so gently rill'd.
No bird sings in the bushes now,
The tree so green is dry;
The zephyr which on me did blow
So cheering, now storms northerly,

* Benjamin Neukirch, a Silesian poet (d. 1729). His translation of Fénelon's *Télémaque* had been read by Goethe when a boy.—O. J (*Autobiog.*, trans. i. 23.)

† Gottlieb Siegmund Corvinus, advocate and poet (under the name Amaranthes), died in Leipsic 1746. In Rost's *Vorspiel*, the "honest Corvin" played an important part as Gottsched's shield-bearer.—O. J.

And scattered blossoms bears on high
All shuddering from the place I fly,
And in this wilderness of stone
Seek sorrow lone.

Yet how happy I am, quite happy. Horn's arrival has, in a measure, drawn me from my melancholy. He is surprised to find me so much altered.

He tries to sound the reason why—
And smiling looks me in the face with thought,
Yet how can he the cause descry,
Myself I know it not?

Your letter speaks of Geyer. Does the good man really think that the audience sit here by hundreds? He was, too, formerly in Leipsic; but in truth how empty were the benches at his lectures!

But I must tell you a little of myself.

Chang'd altogether are the wishes now,
Beloved friend, that rise within my breast.
Thou know'st how much to Poesy I inclined,
How great a hatred smote within my breast
And turn'd itself on those to Law alone
And all its holy mysteries devoted,
Who did not to the Muses' gentle wiles
An ever ready ear and outstretch'd hand
With longing lend. Ah, you know well, my friend,
How deeply (though in error) I believed
The Muse did love me, and vouchsafed me oft
A song. 'Tis true that many a high-flown verse
Resounded from my lyre that neither Muse
Dictated nor Apollo. True, my pride,
Which fancied that the gods did condescend
So lowly down to me, imagined, too,
That from a master-hand nought did proceed
More perfect than from my own hand did come.
I felt not, that no pinions had to me
Been given, with which to steer my course on high;
Nor that perchance they never would be given
By hand of gods to me and yet I thought

Already I possess'd them, and could soar.
But scarce had I come here, when swiftly fell
The mist from o'er my eyes, as I perceived
The great men's fame, and first did apprehend
How much was requisite to earn renown.
Then saw I first that my exalted flight,
As I did think it, nought was but the worm's
Commotion in the dust, who sees the eagle
Soaring towards the sun, and yearns aloft
Like him. He upward strives, and twists himself,
And straining all his nerves with pain, remains
Upon the dust. But sudden comes a wind
Raising the dust in eddies up. The worm
Is lifted in the eddies, deems himself
Great as the eagle, and in the ecstasy
Forthwith exults. But all at once the wind
Withdraws its breath. The dust and eke the worm
Sink down; and now he grovels as before.

Do not be angry over my galimathias. Farewell! Horn will enclose my letter. Greet Kehr. Write. Attend more lectures in future. Horn is to attend five. I six. Farewell! Do not acquire academical manners. Love me. Farewell—farewell! GOETHE.

6.—To Augustin Trapp, Frankfort.*

Mon cher Trapp, Leipsic, ce 2 du Juin 1766.

Vous savez bien ramener les gens à leur devoir, duquel ils se sont éloignés en les contraignant d'une façon, qui ne leurs fait pas sentir que vous les contraignez. Vous m'entendez cher ami? vous souriez de ce que j'ai eu scu si bien penetrer votre intention, et ce même souris me fait esperer le pardon de la faute que j'ai commise, en ne vous écrivant pas tout le temps que je suis à Leipsic. C'etoit faute d'industrie et non pas faute de mémoire. Comment pourrois je oublier Wormbs et les agreables habitans de cette bien aimée? O vous savez trop que

* The address is Monsieur Monsieur Trapp, chez Vt. Sebastian Stern, Francfort-sur-le-Main.—O. J. Trapp's home was at Worms; there is no mention of him or of the subject of the two following letters, or of any visit to Worms in the Autobiography. The letters are printed as given by O. Jahn, as a specimen of Goethe's French at this period.

Worms me tient au cœur. Vous connoissez ma passion pour la belle Charitas* que vous l'avez crue le plus fort motif de m'amener à Vous ecrire en me donnant par Stern le doux espoir, de me faire entendre des nouvelles, qui touchent de plus pres votre charmante nièce. Votre offre a encore plus de pouvoir sur moi, parce que je suis tout a fait delaissé par ce mechant Muller.

Muller! je suis fâché de ce malicieux
Ce n'est plus cet ami si tendre en ses adieux,
Qui, m'aimant autrefois, relevoit ma foiblesse
Se joignit à ma joie et chassa ma tristesse.
Aujourd'hui tout changé, il rit de mes soupirs,
Et dans un noir chagrin fait changer mes plaisirs.
Jamais il ne m'ecrit de nouvelles agreables
Sans qu'il y fasse entrer un recit qui m'accable;
Et qui d'un coup mechant, adroitement porté
Ne m'ôte le bonheur, que lui même a donné,
Le cruel! Il connoit mon cœur sensible et tendre,
Il connoit le repos qu'il y pourroit repandre,
Il scait bien qu'un ami s'il ne peut nous aider,
Devroit en nous plaignant pourtant nous soulager.
Le fait il? Oh que non! ma douleur est estreme.
Je suis faible il est vrai. Est on fort quand on aime?
Mais il ne cherche rien que de combler mes maux,
Et me dit en riant: Ha, tu as des rivaux.
Je ne le scais que trop, sans qu'il le dise encore.
Tout qui la vit l'admire, qui la connoit l'adore;
Mais faut il eveiller, l'idée plein d'effroi;
Un rival est plus digne de cet enfant que moi.
Soit! Si je ne le suis, je vais chercher de l'être.
Chassons le vil honneur! que l'amour soit mon maître.
J'ecouterai lui seul, lui seul doit me guider,
Au sommet du bonheur par lui je vais monter.
Au sommet de la science monté par l'industrie,
Je reviens, cher ami, pour revoir ma patrie,
Et viens voir en depit de tout altier censeur;
Si elle est en état d'achever mon bonheur.

* Charlotte (or according to Düntzer, Charitas) Meixner, the daughter of a rich merchant of Worms, and a cousin of Trapp's. She visited a near relation, Rath Moritz, at Frankfort, who was intimate with the Goethe family, and so became a friend of Cornelia Goethe. See O. Jahn, p. 77.

Mais il faut jusque la que votre main m'assiste
Laissez parler toujours ce docte moraliste.
Ecrivez moi! Que fait l'enfant autant aimé?
Se souvient-il de moi? Ou m'a il oublié?
Ah ne me cachez rien, qu'il m'eleve ou m'accable.
Un poignard de sa main, me seroit agreable.
Ecrivez, c'est allors, que de mon cœur cheri,
Comme elle est mon amante, vous serez mon ami.

Je suis avec toute affection possible
cher Trapp

Le votre GOETHE.

7.—To A. TRAPP.

MONSIEUR MON CHER AMI! Leipsic, ce 1st d'Octb. 1766.

Vous me confondez! Est ce donc vous même qui autrefois mon rival, m'enviates tout jusques au plaisir d'être regardé par ma maîtresse, vous qui quelques fois sentites la rage au cœur, parceque j'aspirois au même bonheur que vous; est-ce donc vous même, qui m'apprenez aujourd'hui le plus souhaitté et le plus inattendu evenement, qui me met au comble de la joie.

Elle a donc vu ma lettre, elle n'a donc pas été fachée de ce cœur farouche, de cet amour ardent, de mes sentimens impetueux, elle même a souhaitté de posseder ces lignes miserables.

Ah pourquoi ne les lui avez pas données sans me demander! Comment avez vous pu croire, que je ne serois pas ravi du sort agreable de ma lettre, d'être gardée par les mains de celle que j'aime, et que je refuserois a mes vers le bonheur d'être si proche d'Elle, que je souhaite moi même si ardement? Donnez lui la lettre, mais dites lui pour quel usage je souhaiterois qu'elle le gardat. Qu'elle se souvienne quelquefois, en regardant ces lignes, d'un amant malheureux qui l'aime sans attendre jamais le fruit de son amour, qui lui souhaite la vie la plus heureuse, sans esperer de pouvoir contribuer à son bonheur quelque peu de chose. Je n'aurois jamais eu la hardiesse de dire si hautement mes sentimens, si elle ne les avait pas reçus si gracieusement.

Vous me dites des compliments de sa part! seroit-ce bien possible, qu'elle eut tant pensé à moi.

Dites lui—Mais que pourriez-vous lui dire quelle ne sont pas encore? Elle connoit mon cœur. Conservez moi son amitié et la vôtre. Adieu! GOETHE.

8.—To WILHELM CARL LUDWIG MOORS,* FRANKFORT.

Goethe amico suo Moorsio
Salutem plurimam dicit.†

MY DEAR MOORS, L[eipsic], 1 October, 1766.

AT last I write to you. The disjointed circumstances in which I find myself will excuse me for having been so long undetermined what to do. I have at last made up my mind to disclose everything to you, and Horn has taken upon himself the trouble of writing to you, a matter which for me, moreover, would not have been the most agreeable. So you know everything. You will have seen therefrom, that your Goethe is not quite so culpable as you think. Think as a philosopher—and so you must think if you wish to prosper in the world—and what blameworthy aspect has my love then? What is social position? A mere colour-wash that men have invented to daub over people who do not deserve it. And money is just as miserable an advantage in the eyes of a person who thinks. I am in love with a girl without position and without means, and at this moment I feel for the very first time the happiness that a true affection affords. For the attachment of my maiden I am not indebted to the

* We learn from a communication made by Otto Jahn (printed in the *Briefe an Leipziger Freunde*) that this Moors was the second son of J. I. Moors, formerly *Schultheiss*, or chief magistrate, of Frankfort. He was born on the same day as Goethe, August 28, 1749. Six months after Goethe's arrival in Leipsic, Horn, who was also there, wrote to Moors bewailing Goethe's altered manners, especially his ridiculous and affected conduct in respect to some woman with whom he was supposed (though wrongly) to be in love, and asking Moors to write and expostulate with him. Moors did so, and elicited the following reply, from which, as also from a second letter from Horn to Moors, it appears that Goethe was only acting a part, and that his affections were really engaged by another lady, namely Käthchen Schönkopf, to whom several of the following letters are addressed. C. L. Moors himself ultimately became *Schultheiss* of Frankfort.

† These lines form the address of the letter, which was enclosed in another.—O. J

miserable petty coquettings of the sentimentalizer; on, through my character, only through my heart, have I won her. I have no need of presents to keep her, and I look down with a contemptuous eye upon the expedients by which before now I have purchased the favours of a W. The excellent heart of my S. is my pledge that she will never fail me until duty and necessity shall bid us part. Were you only to know this excellent girl, dearest Moors, you would forgive me this folly which I am committing in loving her. Yes, she is worthy of the great happiness which I wish her without being able ever to hope that I shall contribute anything to it. Farewell. I will write to your brother; it is not pride, it is carelessness, which has made me forget him. I must in conclusion impose upon you, in the name of friendship, the most profound silence. Let no person know it; none, without exception. You can imagine what harm might hereby come to pass. Farewell.

GOETHE.

9.—To Adam Frederick Oeser,* Leipsic.

Frankfort-on-Maine, 13 Sept., 1768.

Dearest Herr Professor,

I have now been twelve days again in my native town, surrounded by relatives, friends and acquaintances, part of whom rejoice, and part of whom are surprised at my return, whilst all of them take pains to be obliging to the newly-arrived half stranger, and to render bearable to him, by friendly intercourse, a city too greatly the antithesis of Leipsic to possess much attraction for him. We shall see how they succeed; at present I can say nothing. I am too much distracted, and too busily engaged with my new arrangements, for my heart to have much

* Adam Friedrich Oeser was the director of the Academy of Design at Leipsic. He was also professor in the Dresden Academy, and painter to the Court of Saxony. He was a friend of Winckelmann, and his artistic taste was greatly in advance of that of his day. The beneficial influence which he exercised on Goethe, who put himself under his tuition at Leipsic, is enlarged upon in the Autobiography. (Book viii., *et passim.*) The friendship between them proved a lasting one, and, through Goethe, Oeser afterwards became an intimate friend of the dowager Duchess Amalia of Saxe-Weimar.

feeling for what I have lost, and what I here regain. At the present time I only write to advise you that my arrival, after a pleasant journey, has given a long expected gratification to my family, and that my illness, which, according to the report of the physicians here, does not so much affect my lungs as the passages to them, appears daily to diminish. Also that your cabinet-maker,* after staying some days with us, left for his destination with good recommendations, in the hope of succeeding as well as possible in his object, and left his best respects to yourself and your whole house. For the present that is all. Let me defer until a more quiet and seasonable period every grateful acknowledgment for all that I owe you. As soon as I shall have arrived at this much desired period, I will write you a longer and better letter; in the meantime preserve for me all your attachment, your friendship which is so flattering to me, and has cheered me so much; also keep me in the remembrance of your honoured wife, and of your amiable children, and all my friends. In particular I desire you to assure of my regard, Herr Kreuchauf,† Herr Cravinus, Herr von Hardenberg,‡ Herr von Lieven, and Herr Huber, and to wish my successor, Herr Groeni[n]g,§ the most rapid progress in art. I am, with the most constant esteem, dearest Herr Professor, yours most sincerely, J. W. GOETHE.

10.—TO ANNA KATHARINA [KÄTHCHEN] SCHOENKOPF,‖ LEIPSIC.

MADEMOISELLE, [September 1768.]

Herr Goethe, to whom it is well known that scissors, knives, and slippers are the articles particularly in demand

* John Jung (who is afterwards referred to), attendant at the Academy of Art in the Pleissenberg. He was by trade a cabinet-maker, and gained the appellation of "the model cabinet-maker."—O. J.

† See *Autobiog.*, bk. viii. (trans. i. 269).

‡ Afterwards Prince Hardenberg, the celebrated Chancellor of Prussia, 1810–22.

§ *Autobiog.*, bk. viii. (trans. i. 284).

‖ "These letters were in 1849 in the possession of the widow of President Sickel, *née* Kanne, of Leipsic, granddaughter of Schoenkopf, daughter of Käthchen, by whom I am allowed to publish them."—O. J. Schoenkopf carried on the business of a wine-seller, and Goethe was

with you, sends you herewith a pair of pretty good scissors, an excellent knife, and leather for two pairs of slippers. All are of sound material, and substantial, and my master has moreover commended to them the utmost forbearance; yet in my opinion neither blade nor leather will hold out in your hands so long as he. Do not take it ill of me that I speak as I think; but two years and a half you cannot demand of either slipper, knife, or—I will not say what—for cruelly do you treat all that subjects itself, or must be subjected, to your authority. Tear and break them all up by Easter, when a new supply will be at your service; and let these trifles occasionally remind you that my master ever as before is devoted to you. He has not thought fit himself to write to you, that he may not break his vow never to send you a letter before the first of the month.

In the meantime, that is from to-day until the 1st October, he commends himself through me most devotedly; and I myself take this opportunity of similarly commending myself to you.

MICHAEL,
Formerly entitled Duke, but after the loss of his duchy,
A trusty tenant on his Grace's ducal estate.*

11.—To CHRISTIAN G. SCHOENKOPF, LEIPSIC.

October 1, 1768.

YOUR servant, Herr Schoenkopf,—how are you, madam?—good evening, miss,—Peterchen, good evening.

N.B.—You must imagine that I enter at the little door. You, Herr Schoenkopf, are on the sofa by the warm stove,

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accustomed to dine at his house. His daughter, in these letters addressed as Käthchen, is called *Aennchen* in the *Autobiog.*, bk. viii.

* Goethe here refers to the representation of Krüger's comedy, 'Duke Michael,' in which a servant named *Michael*, who had captured a nightingale, and had heard of the high value of the same, dreams that he will so profitably employ the proceeds as to be able at last to purchase a duchy; and in anticipation plays the part of the imagined noble towards his master and his daughter *Hannchen*. As he is announcing his plans to the wondering maiden, he suffers his nightingale to escape, again descends to reason, and comforts himself with her affection.—O. J.

Madame in her corner at the writing-table, Peter close in front of the stove; and if Käthchen is sitting in my place, by the window, she may just get up, and make way for the stranger. Now I begin to discourse.

What a long time I have been away, have I not? Five whole weeks, and more, since I have seen you, since I have spoken to you—a thing that has not happened once in two years and a half, but unfortunately will now happen frequently. You would like to know how I have been getting on all this time? Well, that I can tell you,—middling—only middling.

Apropos, I am sure you will have forgiven me for not having taken leave of you. I was in the neighbourhood, indeed at the door, saw your lamp burning, and went to the foot of the stairs, but had not the heart to mount them. For the last time,—how should I ever have been able to come down again.

So I do now what I should have done then; I thank you for all the affection and friendship you have shown me so constantly, and which I shall never forget. I need not beg of you to remember me; a thousand occasions will come on which you must think of a person who for two years and a half made a part of your family,—who often, perhaps, gave you cause for pain, but yet was always a good young fellow, and whom I hope you will sometimes miss. At any rate I miss you often. Of this I will say no more, for to me it is always a sad subject. My journey was prosperous and uneventful. I found all here well, except my grandfather, who is actually almost recovered from the paralysis of one side, but still suffers in his speech. I am as well as any one can be who is in doubt as to whether he has pulmonary disease or not. Yet I am somewhat improved; my cheeks are filling up again; and as I have neither girls nor worldly cares to plague me here, I hope to get on from day to day.

A word to you, Mamsell! Did my messenger lately hand you the little trifles I sent you on account? and if so, how did you receive them? The other commissions have not been forgotten, although they are not all executed. The neckerchief I have completed with great gusto, and it shall be sent by the first opportunity. If you

would like one of the enclosed colour, you have only to command it, telling me at the same time whatever colour you would like on it. The fan is in hand; the ground will be flesh-coloured, with natural flowers. Have you still got the shoes? See that your shoemaker takes care in making them up, when the colours are well fixed, not to spoil them; and then send me your size, and I will paint you as many as you please, in whatever colour you please, for they are soon done. Time will settle any other matters. Write to me when you like, only let it be before the 1st November, for then I shall write to you, and more. Yet, dear Herr Schoenkopf, I know you do not write yourself; but urge Käthchen on a little, that I may soon receive news of you. Surely, madame, it would be unfair did I not receive, at least every month, a letter from the house in which, up to this time, I was to be found every day. And if you do not write to me, all the same on the 1st November I will certainly write again.

Compliments to Madame Obermann, Hr. Obermann, and Mademoiselle Obermann particularly; to Hr. Reich, Hr. Junius, besides Mademoiselle Weidemann, to whom you must apologize for my not having taken leave. Adieu, all of you. Käthchen, if you do not write to me, you shall see!

Sent off 3rd October.

12.—To Käthchen Schoenkopf.

My dearest Friend, Frankfort, 1 Nov., 1768.

Still as lively as ever! still as malicious as ever! So happy in showing up good in a false light! So pitiless as to laugh at a sufferer, and jeer at one who complains! All this wicked pleasantry is contained in your letter: and could the countrywoman of Minna write otherwise?

I thank you for so unexpectedly early a reply; and I beg of you in future in pleasant happy hours to think of me, and, if possible, to write to me. It affords me the greatest delight to witness your liveliness, your vivacity, your wit, however flippant and sharp it may be.

No one knows better than I the figure I have cut; and the figure my letters cut I can well suppose. When we

remember what has happened with others, it needs no prophetic soul to divine what will happen with us. With that, I am well content. It is the usual lot of the departed, that those left behind and those coming after should dance on their graves.

How does our manager, our director, our majordomo, our friend Schoenkopf, get on?

Does he ever think of his leading actor, who all this time has played as well and as naturally as possible, in comedy and tragedy, the onerous and difficult parts of lover and deserted friend? Has no one yet offered to take my place?—though it is not likely to be completely filled.

You may sooner find ten actors to play *Duke Michael* than one to play *Don Sassafras.** Do you understand my meaning?

Our good Mamma has reminded me of Stark's 'Manual';† I will not forget it. You remind me of Gleim; be assured I will forget nothing. Absent as well as present, I seek to satisfy the wishes of those I love. I very frequently think of your library; you may rely on its being increased very soon. If I do not always perform at once what I have promised, I often do more than I promise.

You are right, my friend, in supposing that I am now punished for my sins against Leipsic. My present residence is as unpleasant as my residence in Leipsic would have proved delightful, had certain parties felt disposed to make it agreeable to me. If you will blame me you must act fairly. You know what made me discontented, wilful, and sullen. The roof was good, but the beds might have been better, says Francisca.‡

Apropos, what news of *our* Francisca? Will she soon have made it up with Just? I fancy so. As long as the Corporal was there she thought of her promise; but now that he is off to Persia, why, out of sight out of

* This expression, which puzzled Otto Jahn, is probably an allusion, of a rather dubious sort, to his own state of health. In Letter 17 it seems to be applied to Horn.

† Probably H. F. Stark's *Daily Manual for Good and Evil Days.* Frankfort, 1739.—O. J.

‡ The allusion here and in the following passage is to characters in Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*, which had recently been acted at Leipsic.

mind. She will sooner take up with a lover she would rather not have had, than not have any. Remember me to the good girl. You are rather stiff about the particular compliment I paid your fair neighbour.* What remains for you? Why, what a question! You have my whole heart, all my affection! and the most pointed compliment does not amount to the thousandth part of that; and that you well know, although you act, for the torment or amusement of your friend (either is the same to you) as if you did not think so; and you take care in your letter to tell me this—for instance, where you speak of my departure;—but let us pass this over.

Show this letter, and all my letters, to your parents, and, if you like, to your *most intimate friends*, but to no one besides. I write, as I have spoken, in all honesty; and therefore I wish no one who might distort my meaning to set eyes on it. I am as ever, unceasingly yours,

J. W. GOETHE.

13.—TO FRIEDERIKE OESER,† LEIPSIC.

MAMSELL, Frankfort, 6 Nov., 1768

As fractious as a teething child,
Now downcast like a man by writs made wild;
Then like a hypochondriac quiet,
And moral as a Mennonite,
Obedient as a pretty lamb;
Then as a bridegroom brisk I am,
Half ailing and anon half well once more,
My body wholly well, only my windpipe sore;
Disgusted much that neither lung
Inhales sufficient breath to give my tongue
What many a time it wants, when it would proudly boast
What I have had with you, and what I now have lost.

With might and main they try to make me live
Afresh, and strength and stamina to give.
I'm handed by my *Doctor Medicinae*
Decoctions of the *Cortex Chinae*,

* The Mademoiselle Obermann mentioned at the end of the last letter. Her parents lived opposite to the Schoenkopfs.—O. J.

† A daughter of Adam Friedrich Oeser.

The young man's nerves with torpor stricken
In hand and foot and eye
To brace anew, and memory
And intellect to quicken.

"By day, and specially by night,
Yield not to Thought's alluring flight!"
What a prescription for an active mind
By every charm to ecstasy inclined!
He takes away my Boucher's "Maid"
From my apartment; hangs instead
A superannuated *frow*,
With teeth half broken out and wrinkle-furrowed face,
By careful, frigid Gerard Dow,
Upon my walls; and orders me, in place
Of wine, a tasteless oatmeal brew.

Oh! say thou, do:
Can one endure a lot more sad—
My body old, in years a lad,
Half ailing, half in health to be?
Such doleful moods ensue that I
Could ne'er be free,
Had I six mandrakes,* from my misery.
Of what avail to me were all earth's wealth?
The world 's no pleasure without health.

And yet indeed I'd not complain,
For I already am well versed in woes,
If I had only that, which pain
And weight of sickness to sustain
More strength than virtue's self bestows,
The short'ning of dull rainy hours,
A balsam plaster for all sores—
Companions whose love one knows

'Tis true I have continually
Right friendly people at my side,
Who when I suffer grieve with me,
And many a joy for me provide;
I'm only wanting to myself, quite blest to be.
Yet no one know I who the misery

* ". . . . Not poppy, nor *mandragora*,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world . . . ."—*Othello*.

Of pain so quickly mitigates, or who
With one look gives the soul repose, as you.

I came to thee a dead man from the grave,
Whom soon a second Death had taken for his own.
And he around whose head he once hath closely flown,
That one
Will tremble at the thought, aye, till life's day is done.
I know well how I trembled have;
Yet thou didst change, with thy endearing powers,
The tomb into a bed of flowers,
As thou didst tell how fair, how sorrow-free,
How good, how sweet was thy blest destiny—
With tones of such deluding witchery
That I of whatsoe'er grief had bereft me
Because thou hadst it—felt as if 'twas left me.
Content, and, what is more, with joy away I came
And all my journey was the same.

Hither I came, and found the ladies here
Somewhat—if one must say it—as they were.
Enough! not one has moved me to this day.*
Though what Herr Schübler † once affirmed
Of Hamburg belles I cannot say,
Yet am I too a stickler most confirmed
Since Leipsic girls led me astray,
Whom hardly can I e'er forget;
And you must know how easily dispraised are they
Whose worth is by your standard set.
Oh! gracious Heaven! as for sprightliness,
For intellect, and wit, not one like you have we;
A voice like yours for tunefulness,
How could such in the Empire be?

* Horn also writes after his return to Frankfort. "It is quite intolerable here in the Empire; the people are as stupid as ever one can imagine. Often I am forced to laugh at it, but more often it annoys me. The girls! oh they are quite unbearable! very proud, and without any common sense. I could go mad when I think of Leipsic. Not one of them is capable of carrying on a conversation, except about the weather, or a new-fashioned headdress.—O. J.

† Daniel Schiebeler, of Hamburg, according to Otto Jahn, resided in Leipsic from 1765 to 1768, and occupied himself with music and poetry. In his poem *Pygmalion* he likens the ladies of his native city to the most beautiful statues. See *Autobiog.*, bk. viii. (trans. i. 280).

Such discourse as our garden tête-a-tête—
That at the play too—in unusual style,
So gay, yet so discreet the while—
For such I needs must wait.

If, fitfully, with girls I'm gay,
They give me a censorious frown:
"The *Herr* must be from Bergamo!"* they say,
And not in quite a civil tone.
If one shows sense, that too they will not have;
For if one's self one cannot force
To be the most obedient slave
Of Grandison,† and blindly to endorse
The tyrants' every word,
One's laugh'd to scorn without being heard.

How good you maidens are, to self-improvement prone,
Kindly to others' faults, severe towards your own;
And though to please you take no care,
There's no one whom you win not to you.
Ah! one must be your friend, little as one may know you
One loves before one is aware.
But hereabout, with womankind
One has but dreary tedious sport;
For friendship, they've no gifts of mind;
For love, they are of feeling short.

Had I not many a whim, so were I surely done—
Did I not often make untimely fun,
Did I not laugh where none a joke can see,
Did I not think that you are thinking oft of me.

Yes, think of me you often must, say I;
Upon that day especially
When at your cottage ‡ you may be—
That spot which such anxiety—
The spot which so much pleasure, gave to me.

You do not understand? I will explain;
I know that you will pardon me.

* Bergamo is the home of Harlequin, as Salzburg is of *Hanswurst* [the German 'Jack-Pudding'].—O. J.

† Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*. See, again, p. 29.

‡ At Dölitz, more than three miles from Leipsic.—O. J.

The songs that I have given to thee, these will remain
The special property of that fair spot and thee.

When from the town I fled away,
Teased by my cruel maiden, in dismay,
Audaciously I did essay
To seek you out ere break of day,
Within those fields beloved by you
Which from your words so well I knew.

So now within your paradise, I trod
On every mead, in every wood,
By stream, by brook, my eager face aflame
With ruddy morning-light, and sought—but you ne'er came.

Then slew I, prompted by my evil mood,
The wretched frog, hard by the sunlit flood;
Then round and round careering, I
Caught now a rhyme, and now a butterfly.

And many a rhyme and many a butterfly
Flew by
The hand outstretched to take; which stood
In very act of catching stayed,
When on my listening ear from out the wood
Did fall the sound of voice or tread.

I sang these lays by morning light;
At evening, home my way I made;
I took my pen, and did indite
The verses good and verses bad.

With fortune ever worse, I oft again
Return'd to the ill-omen'd plain,
Till fate at last to favour me did deign,
And one more day I had not hoped for gave.
Yet scarce did I enjoy the sweet hours of farewell;
They were but all too near the grave.
My feelings I forbear to tell,
For this prosaic verse of mine
Is with such feelings now but ill-attuned.

Here then you have my lays,* and, to repay
All that I have endured for you,
When to your blest abode you hie away
Then take them too;
And sing them oft, rejoicing, where
My grief dictated every song.
Then think of me, and say: "'Twas there
Beside the stream he tarried long,
The poor one! who so oft, by fortune stern,
Saw pitiless the meadows fair.
Were he this moment to return,
Ah! now would I be there."

But now, methinks, 'twere high time to be done,
For if one thus two sheets † with verses fill
They will at last refuse to run;
Yet only wait till humour me compel,
And your good favour is assured me still,
I'll write you many a letter like this one.

If brothers, sisters you will greet,
Let Richter ‡ too included be.
Farewell! and if good luck's your friend as constantly
As I, then you will e'er the fairest fortune meet.

GOETHE.

14.—To A. F. Oeser, Leipsic.

Frankfort, 9 Nov., 1768.

Most esteemed Herr Professor,

The protracted absence of your Jung has delayed this letter, which I ought to have written so soon, for a month and more. I hoped to send by him to Leipsic a packet of letters, and a packet of trifles, which must now wait for some other opportunity.

Should you not have received more tidings of him than I have, you will be more anxious than I; for I always think that he has written to you, or returned to you by

* See note *, p. 31.

† The letter, in fact, fills two sheets, written very closely and neatly. —O. J.

‡ Receiver-General (*Obergeleitseinnehmer*) Richter. See *Autobiog.* bk. viii. (trans. i. 270).

some other route. I hope soon to ascertain; a kind friend has undertaken to inquire in Grehweiler as to how he and his affairs stand.

My health begins to improve, and yet still it is not much better than bad. The enclosed letter, which I have taken the liberty of addressing to your daughter, says more on this point, and more on my mode of life otherwise.

Art, now as before, forms almost my chief occupation, although I read and think on the subject more than I actually draw; for, now that I am to run alone, I begin to feel all my weakness. I can hardly get on at all, Herr Professor, and have no resource but to take ruler in hand, and see how far I can progress with this support in Architecture and Perspective.

How am I not indebted to you, dearest Herr Professor, for having pointed out to me the path to the true and the beautiful, and for having made my heart susceptible of their charms. I owe you more than I can thank you for. My taste for the beautiful, my knowledge, my ideas, have they not all been derived from you? How certain—how clearly true, is the strange and almost incomprehensible phrase that the studio of the great artist develops sooner the developing philosopher and the developing poet, than the lecture-rooms of the philosopher and the critic. Instruction does much, but encouragement everything. Who amongst all my teachers has considered me worthy of encouragement, but yourself. They either altogether blamed, or altogether praised, and nothing can be so injurious to progress. Encouragement after blame is sunshine after rain--fruitful increase. Indeed, Herr Professor, had you not given my love for the muses a helping hand, I should have really despaired. What I was when I came to you, you know, as well as what I was when I left you; the difference is your work. I well know that that happened to me which happened to Prince Biribincker,* after his bath of flames; I saw altogether differently, I saw more than before; and, what is beyond all, I saw what I still have before me to do, if I will be anything.

You have taught me to be modest without losing confidence, and to be proud without presumption. I should

* In Wieland's *Don Sylvio von Rosalva*.—O. J.

never end, were I to tell all I have learned from you. Excuse this apostrophe, these sentences, from a thankful heart. I have this in common with all tragic heroes, that my passion is very apt to overflow in tirades, and woe be to him who comes in the way of my lava.

The company of the muses, and a written correspondence maintained with my friends, will this winter render pleasant my sickly, solitary life, which, for a young man of twenty years of age, would without them be rather a martyrdom.

My friend Seekatz * died a few weeks before my arrival. My love for art, and my gratitude to artists, will give you the measure of my grief. If Herr Collector Weis[s]e† would do me the kindness of inserting a notice of his life and works in the *Library*, I would send it to you.‡ Be so kind as to take an opportunity of asking him about it. I have just read *Idris*,§—of my thoughts on this, another time. My parents greet you and your family, with all the affection and gratitude they owe to a man to whom their son is so much indebted. Farewell.

I am, dearest Herr Professor, yours,

GOETHE.

15.—To A. F. OESER, LEIPSIC.

MOST ESTEEMED PROFESSOR, Frankfort, 24 Nov., 1768.

Jung leaves to-morrow; can I neglect this opportunity of writing to you? I envy every one going to Saxony, my letters included; and yet my correspondence with Saxony is now almost the only thing in which I take real delight.

You will be astonished at seeing all the treasures your cabinet-maker takes with him. We were all rejoiced to find that his journey has proved so successful—his sickness excepted, and hope that his return journey at this bad time of the year will be as pleasant as is likely.

* A Frankfort artist. See *Autobiog.*, bk. iii. *et passim.*

† District-Receiver of Customs, and a dramatic writer. See *Autobiog.*, bk. viii. (trans. i. 280).

‡ In the *New Library of the Fine Arts* (*Neuen Bibl. der sch. Wissensch.*) there is only a short notice of Seekatz, which did not emanate from Goethe.—O. J.

§ By Wieland.

Were it not that the road to Leipsic is so bad, and so long, I should some day or other take you by surprise; for I have much to say to you. You will remember that I had always a nice stock of reflexions, which I generally laid before you. It is true they were often somewhat far-fetched, but then you taught me better. There are, however, a thousand things one can talk of without hesitation, but which one would greatly hesitate to write about.

My thoughts on *Idris*, and the letter to Riedel,* on *Ugolino*,† on Weisse's *Grossmuth* (Magnanimity) *für Grossmuth*, on the Essay upon Prints, from the English,‡ are all of them fitting subjects for conversation, but not precise enough for writing about without length or method.

The collections here are, it is true, small, but all the more numerous and select; my greatest delight is to make myself thoroughly acquainted with them. It is well that you have taught me how to look around.

Generally speaking, however, I suffer much for art. It is my luck, to which I am already accustomed, to suffer for my friends. Apostles, prophets, and poets are seldom honoured in their own country, and still more seldom at a time when they are to be seen every day; but yet I cannot forbear preaching in favour of good taste; even if one does not accomplish much, one is always learning more by it, if one only has the opportunity of finding out that extensive learning, reflective acute intelligence, cursive wit, and profound scholastic knowledge, are very heterogeneous with good taste.

The ladies here lay great store by the wonderful, and hold less by the beautiful, simple, or comic. Consequently, all such marvellous tales as *Grandison*, *Eugenie*,§ the

* Wieland's letter to Riedel was prefixed to the first edition of *Idris and Zenide*, 1767.—O. J.

† On April 19, 1805, Goethe wrote to Fr. Jacobi of Gerstenberg's *Ugolino*: "I have taken this opportunity of reading the piece through again, and, according to my present views and convictions, must consider it wonderful." See also Schiller's correspondence with G., Letter 801. —O. J.

‡ *An Essay upon Prints*. London, 1768. 8vo. German ed., Frankfort, 1768.—O. J.

§ A translation of Beaumarchais' *Eugenie* (Paris, 1767) appeared at Leipsic in 1768.—O. J.

Galley Slave,"* and all the fantastic breed are held in great respect here. Of *Wilhelmine*,† which yet, thank Heaven, has gone through three editions, I have not, in spite of all inquiries, been able to find a copy in any lady's library. More of this sad state of affairs in my next.

If the red stone and the black chalk are good, I have more at your service. Have the kindness to remember me to your wife, and all the family, as well as to my well-wishers and friends, among whom I name Herren Creuchauf, Weisse, Clodius Hubert, von Hartenberg,‡ Cravinus, and Gröning. My parents commend themselves to you, and I am, with the most sincere respect,

Your obedient scholar and servant,

GOETHE.

16.—To K. SCHOENKOPF.

Frankfort, 30 Dec., 1768.

MY BEST, MY MOST ANXIOUS FRIEND,

You will doubtless have received from Horn, for the new year, the intelligence of my recovery, and I hasten to confirm it.§ Yes, my dearest one, the cloud has rolled by, and it will serve to comfort you in future when you hear—he is again laid up! You know my constitution often makes a false step, and in a week I am generally well again. This time it went badly with me, and looked worse than it was, for it entailed dreadful pains. But in evil there is also good. I have learnt during my sickness many things I should not otherwise have learnt in my life. Now that all is over, I am quite lively again, although I have not left my room for fully three weeks, and scarcely any one visits me but my Doctor, who, thank God, is an estimable man. What a foolish creature is man! When I was in lively company I was ill-tempered;

* The *Galley Slave* (Leipsic, 1768) was a translation of *L'honnête Criminel* of Fenouillot de Falbaire (Paris, 1766). Lessing at one time thought of working on the same material; "for he was not at all satisfied with the French piece, great as was the applause bestowed on the German representation."—Lessing's *Theatr. Nachlass*, I., p. xlvii.—O. J.

† Thümmel's *Wilhelmine* appeared in Leipzig in 1764, 1766, and 1768.—O. J.

‡ See note †, p. 16.

§ Goethe had left Leipsic in impaired health, and had had a relapse. See *Autobiog.*, bk. viii.

now that I am forsaken of all the world I am full of vivacity: for even during my illness my cheerfulness was a source of relief to my family, who were hardly in the position to console themselves, let alone me. In a fit of folly I composed the lines on the new year,* which you will have received; and to kill time, I have had them printed. Besides, I draw a good deal, write tales, and am contented. God grant me in the new year everything good for me. May he grant this to all of us; and if we ask for nothing more we may certainly hope to receive it. If I can only last until April, I shall be able to resign myself to my fate. Then I hope to get on better, more particularly as my health may be expected to improve daily, now that my complaint seems to be known. My lungs are as healthy as can be, but my stomach seems oppressed with something. I have been given to understand, in confidence, that I may look forward to an agreeable and pleasant mode of life: my mind, therefore, is contented and at ease. As soon as I recover, I am to visit foreign countries; and it will only rest with you, and somebody else, to decide how soon I shall again see Leipsic. In the meanwhile, I contemplate starting for France, to see what life there is like, and to learn the language. You can therefore form a notion of what a polite man I shall doubtless have become by the time I see you again. The idea often strikes me—what a stupid fate mine would be were I to die before Easter, notwithstanding all my fine projects. In that case, I would order a gravestone for the Leipsic churchyard, so that every year, on St. John's, my name-saint's day, you might at least visit the St. John's-Manikin and my grave at the same time.† What say you?

Commend me to the continued regard of your parents. Kiss your dear friend for me, and thank her on my part for the interest she takes in me. I will soon write to her

* A piece of this nature is the first of the *Neue Lieder*, composed by Goethe, and set to music by Bernhard Theodor Breitkopf. They are reprinted in *Der junge Goethe*, edited by M. Bernays (Leipz. 1875).

† It is still customary in Leipsic, on Midsummer day (St. John Baptist), to visit the churchyard, and ornament the graves with flowers. On the same occasion a small figure of St. John, carved in wood, is placed on the fountain and decked with garlands.—O. J.

Your neighbour I really am sorry for. Will it not prove the greatest disappointment to the loving couple? Poor creatures! They are in great straits; and, Heaven help them or not, they will not be thankful for it. That you will live to see, and will say,—Did not Goethe say so? Certes, marriage, nowadays, has become a grand affair; neither of them has, or at least one of them has not, a pennyworth of discretion. Oh, holy Andrew! descend, and work a miracle, or we shall have a mess. N.B.—Take care that nobody sees this but those it may help. Farewell, my love; in sickness or health, altogether yours,

GOETHE.

17.—To K. SCHOENKOPF.

Frankfort, 31 Jan., 1769.

To-day or to-morrow—it is all one when I write, if you only learn how I am getting on. Things must be better in Leipsic than here. Neither you, nor Horn, nor anyone else writes to me. Possibly you are enjoying balls and twelfth-night revelries, whilst I am moping here. Miserable carnival. For a fortnight have I again been indoors. At the commencement of the new year I was released on parole; the little license accorded me is again expired, and, in all likelihood, I shall be caged for a good part of February. Heaven knows when this is to end, but I make myself as comfortable as I can, and trust you do likewise. I shall have been here half-a-year on the 3rd of March, and already have been ill for half-a-year. I have learned much in this half-year. Horn, I fancy, must also have learned more all this time; we shall not know one another again when we meet. Horn certainly cannot have half the desire to see me that I have to see him. The good fellow is to leave Leipsic, and as yet has not spit blood. Sad fate! "Can you be so merry who have only to-day left Leipsic?" said a Saxon officer to me, when I supped in Naumburg with him on the 28th August. I replied, "Our hearts frequently know nothing of the hilarity of our blood." After a time, he commenced, —"You appear unwell?" I added, "I really am so and

seriously. I have spit blood." Spit blood!" he cried; "Ah! then I see it all. You have already made a great march on the road out of the world, and Leipsic became indifferent to you because you could no longer enjoy it." "You have hit it," I answered; "the fear of death has dispelled all other regret." "Naturally enough," he said, taking me up; "for life is always the grand point: without life is no enjoyment. But," he continued, "has not your departure been made easy?" "Easy?" I inquired; how so?" "Why, plainly on the side of the ladies," said he; "you have the aspect of being not altogether unwelcome amongst the fair sex." I made a bow for the compliment. "I say what I mean," he added; "you seem to me a deserving young man, but you are ill; and I wager, therefore, ten to nothing that no maiden has held you by the sleeve." I held my tongue, and he laughed. Stretching his hand to me across the table, he said, "Now I have lost ten dollars if you say on your conscience, 'One has held me back.'" "Done, Captain!" I said, seizing his hand; "you keep your ten dollars. You are an expert, and do not throw your money away." "Bravo!" said he; "I see that you, too, are an expert. God preserve you! And if you recover your health, you will derive advantage from this experience. I"—— And then he plunged into an account of his history, which I pass over in silence. I sat and listened with dismay, and when he had ended, assured him I was confounded; and my history, as well as the history of my friend, Don Sassafras,* has more and more confirmed in my mind the philosophy of the captain.

Unfortunate Horn! He has always prided himself so much on his calves; they will certainly bring him now to grief. Only let him get away alive.† You may still look

* See note p. 20, and cf. Geiger's *Goethe Jahrbuch*, p. 376.

† Horn returned to Frankfort in the beginning of April. In his first letter he says:—"Goethe desires to be remembered to you, Mamsel. He still looks far from well, and has grown very stupid. The air of the Empire must have affected him. I must see that I pack off, or I shall be in the same predicament; and I am yet too young to become stupid. The time hangs terribly heavy on my hands, although I am seldom alone. Goethe tells me to hang myself; but here, at any rate, I shall not; had I been wise I should have hanged myself in Leipsic."—O. J.

at him to your heart's content, for he is the last Frankforter of any note left in Leipsic; and when he has gone, you may wait awhile before you set eyes on another. But console yourselves, I will soon be with you again.

Good heavens! here am I joking again in the midst of my affliction. How should I get on were I not in such good spirits? Completely chained to one place for almost two months.

Adieu, my best of friends. Greet your parents, and your friend, and whenever you write let me know how the members of the former Sunday party are now agreeing amongst themselves. Love me. Ill or in health, till death

YOUR FRIEND, GOETHE.

18.—To FRIEDERIKE OESER.

MADEMOISELLE, Frankfort, 13 February, 1769.

The answer has been long deferred,—ought I perhaps to beg you to excuse me? Certainly not, if I could do so; if I could say: Mam'selle, pardon me,—I have had many, many things to do, at which Hercules might have dislocated his arm; I could not possibly do it; the days were short; my brain, owing to the influence of Aries and Aquarius, was somewhat cold and damp,—and if I had brought to bear the full string of commonplace excuses, not to let it be imputed to myself I was lazy: if I were in circumstances to say any such thing, I would rather never write at all. Oh! Mam'selle, it was an inopportune composition of my natural humour, which screwed me for four weeks to my bed-post, and for four weeks to my chair, so that all the time I would just as soon have been bewitched in a cleft tree. And yet they have passed by, and I have studied well and thoroughly the chapter of contentment, patience, and what not of subjects in the book of fate, and am grown somewhat the wiser thereby. You will therefore excuse me if the present letter is more a commentary on yours than a reply to it; for so great as is the pleasure which I have had from your letter, so much also have I to take exception to it; and—*Honneur aux dames*—but indeed you are wrong.

We must understand each other better, before we proceed further. Assume, then, that I am dissatisfied with you. And now I will begin, and go on from beginning to end, in order, like a chronicler, and the letter will grow to be as long as the dissertation of a cathedral canon on a short simple text.

You know, then, of old—at least it is not my fault if you do not know it—you know that I look upon you as a very good girl who, if you were so disposed, could easily have it in your power to reconcile an honourable man with the female sex, even though he were as prejudiced as Wieland. If I am wrong, that again is not my fault. For nearly two years I have frequented your house, and have seen you almost as seldom as a nightly-searching Magus hears a mandrake whistle.

To speak then of what I have seen—the Church does not judge of that which is not revealed, said Paris—I do assure you that I have been thereby enchanted; but indeed philosophers of my stamp generally carry with them Ulysses' bundle of herbs, along with other trinkets, in a *sachet*, so that the most powerful witchcraft does them no more harm than a drinking bout,—a headache next morning; but the eyes again are clear. Let this be well understood, in order that there may be no misconception.

You are fortunate, very fortunate; if my heart were not just now dead to all sensation, I would tell you how; indeed I would sing it to you. The most possible of all Gessner's worlds; at least so I imagine. And your mind has formed itself with very much good fortune; you are tender, sensitive, a connoisseur of charmingness; this is good for you and for your companions, but it is not good for me; and you must be good for me, if you would be a thoroughly good girl. I was once ill, and again became well, well enough to reflect with comfort upon my last will. I slunk about in the world like a spirit, which after death is often drawn again to those places which formerly attracted him when he could still enjoy them in the flesh; sorrowfully he creeps to his treasures, and I meekly to my girls, to my friends. I hoped to be commiserated; for our self-love must hope for something, either love or pity. Mistaken spirit, remain in your tomb!

You may weep and wail ever so pitifully and dolefully in your white sheet,—he that is dead is dead; he that is sick is as good as dead; go, ghost, go! if you don't want them to say you are a troublesome ghost. The stories that led me to these reflexions do not belong to this letter. Only one of them will I narrate to you circumstantially, if I can still manage to recall it correctly. I came to a girl,—I could have sworn it was you,—she received me with a great shout and almost died of laughter that a man could have the ridiculous idea of dying of consumption in his twentieth year. Indeed she is right, thought I; it is laughable, although as little so for me as for the old fellow in the sack, who well-nigh died of a beating at which a whole audience almost died of laughing.* As however all things in this world have two sides, and a pretty, agreeable girl can easily make one believe that black is white; and as I am at any rate easily persuaded; the thing pleased me so well that I allowed myself to fancy that it was all imagination. and that one would be happy, so long as one were pleased, and so forth; and she told me how happy she had been in the country, how she had played at blindman's-buff, at whip-top, had fished, and sung, so that I felt as a young girl does in reading Grandison: there's a fine specimen of a man, such an one you too might have, thinks she. How gladly would I have joined in, and have made my illness worse. Let a man be what he may, Mam'selle, there is nothing so bad but that fate could not turn it to good account,—your mercilessness during the last few days towards the poor doomed one gave him strength. Believe me, you alone are to blame that I left Leipsic without any especial pang. Joy of heart and heroism are as communicable as electricity, and you possess as much of them as an electrical machine has sparks within it. I will see you again to-morrow!—such a farewell to a poor wretch one is about to chain to the galley, by my faith, is not the most tender. So be it! It gave me strength, and yet I was by no means satisfied with it. Between ourselves, be it said, greatness of soul is generally want of feeling. When I consider it well, you acted quite naturally; my departure must have been a

* Molière's *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, iii., 2.

subject of indifference to you; but to me, in truth, it was not. I should certainly have wept had I not been afraid of spoiling your white gloves; an unnecessary precaution, for I saw just at last that they were of silk and knitted, and then I could have wept again, only it was too late. But let me conclude. I left Leipsic, and your spirit accompanied me with all the sprightliness of its being. I arrived here, and commenced making observations for which time had failed me before. And I looked about for friends, and found none: for girls, they were not so compounded as I like; and I was in grief and I complain to you in beautiful rhyme, and wonder, will she commiserate you, and comfort the unhappy swain with a letter? Then came a letter! Well, it is true I was enlivened; for you cannot imagine the drought which causes one here to pant for agreeable entertainment; but comforted I was not. I saw you were of opinion that poetry and untruth are sisters, and that your correspondent might perhaps be a respectable man, but he was also a thorough poet, who, from his preference in favour of chiaroscuro, laid on his colours somewhat more strongly and his shadows somewhat more darkly than Nature does. *Bon.* I will give you credit where you are right. But it is a little too bad to attribute things to me which I as little possess as the philosopher's stone. *A sound head,—a good heart!* now, as to that, I might yet perhaps let myself be persuaded that I have them; but teachable lady-disciples, male friends as is fitting,—these I still await: when I have caught such birds of paradise I will write to tell you. That you therefore were wrong to write me out a recipe according to the species as it existed in Leipsic, and that this must of necessity vex me, this you probably now conceive. It is very unreasonable; you have made my heart indifferent about leaving L., you will have it that I forget it altogether. Oh, you know yourself and your countrywomen too little! Any one who has seen *Minna* played in Frankfort, knows better what Saxony is. You are therefore wrong. This I repeat once more, although for the instant I know not why; for I have written so much about it that I really have quite forgotten the text. Let it be what it will, the whole affair was an impartial, disin-

terested reminder of a certain young lady, that a really good heart includes also compassion; that the feeding of poor people or of larks is not, by far, the highest degree of feeling; that laughter at real misfortune is just as little a good cure as when it is from forgetfulness; that when we are ourselves satisfied we can with very little grace address a discourse upon contentment to a hungry man; and, lastly, that the most delightful letter does not possess a hundredth part of the charm of a conversation. Now you might have cast all this and much more in my teeth, and not by any means so gently, whereby I should have been confounded, and should never have ventured to make any, even the least, of these inopportune observations. If young ladies only knew what they could do if they wished! It is well that it is as it is; I shall be content that they do not know all our weak points. But enough of this subject, about which I have written so much, because I hope never again to write about it.

Would that I may have benefited some unfortunate one whom fate may in the future give into your hands, which the daintier they are can so much the more cruelly inflict pain. Hereafter I hope to annoy you with no complaints, with no wailings. I hope never to have need of the compassion to which I exhort you. In spite of the illness which I have had, in spite of the illness which I still have, I am so contented, so cheerful, often so merry, that I would not give in to you, even if you visited me at this very moment, when I have settled myself in a chair in front of a table, with my feet wrapped up like a mummy, to write to you.

Here too must be said that this new year's time I have written a farce very shortly to appear, under the title of "Comedy in Leipsic." For at the present time all farces are contraband in Parnassus, like everything else of the time of Louis the Fourteenth.

Be your connexion with Fate what it may, I shall hold my ground with her; and your motto might pass muster, and be a good and proper one, were it not that it is taken from Rhingluff,* or Heaven knows what he is called: twenty

* K. Fr. Kretzschmann's *Song of Ringulph the Bard, when Varus was Slain* (Zittau, 1769), was highly praised in the *N. Bibl. der schön. Wis-*

poets have said it just as well, and better; and why should the man with the barbarous name receive all the honour? for, between ourselves, I am not a friend of his. I know nothing further of him; but his verses, which I do know, give the lie to the venerable beard and majestic presence Herr Geyser* attributes to him. I will swear that in real life he looks younger. Are the songs bad, then? Who is likely to ask such heartsearching questions? Enough, I do not know what to make of them. Mam'selle, if you desire it, you shall have my opinion respecting all sorts of things: tell me your own, and it will afford the most agreeable and most fruitful materials for our correspondence; but experience produces distrust. I speak frankly to you, as I would speak to few in Leipsic, only do not let anyone see how I think. Since Clodius† has evinced a more friendly disposition towards me, a great stone has been taken from my heart. I have always guarded against giving offence. Rhingulff doubtless is in Leipsic; perhaps you know him. I know nothing; for I have lost all connexion with all witty souls. I think of R. as of all poems of this description. Thank God we have peace! Of what use is all this cry of war? Yes, if it was a sort of poetry, in which a great abundance of images and of sentiment, and so forth, was contained. Ah! then, good, there's always fish there. But nothing besides an eternal thunder of battle, the fire flashing valiantly from the eyes, the golden hoof splashed with blood, the helm with its plume, the spear, a few dozen monstrous hyperboles, an eternal ha! ha! when the line cannot be completed, and the monotony of the measure if it goes on long—all this together is unbearable; Gleim, and Weisse, and Gessner in one short poem, and enough to satiety of aught else. It is

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sensch. 1769, VIII., i., p. 76. Later appeared *The Wail of Ringulph the Bard* (Zittau, 1771). In the *Frankfurter Anzeigen* Goethe ridiculed him thus:—"Herr Kretzschmann appears here in the altogether unexpected light of a patron, standing with a golden sickle under the consecrated oak, and, as an old bard, initiating the stranger Telynhard. Can any one tell who consecrated him as Ringulph, so that one might rebuke him a little on Klopstock's and Gerstenberg's account?"—O. J.

* The copperplate engraver, afterwards Oeser's son-in-law.—O. J

† Professor Clodius, whom Goethe and his friends had offended. See *Autobiog.*, bk. vii.

a thing that fails altogether to interest; a wish-wash that is good for nothing but to waste time. Forced pictures,—because the versifier has not seen nature; eternal tautology,—for battle is battle; and the situations which it affords are very stale. And what does the victory of the Germans concern me, that I should listen to the shouts of joy? Why, I can shout myself. Make me feel something which I have never felt—think of something which I have never thought of—and I will praise you. But noise and shouts instead of pathos,—that will not answer the purpose,—tinsel, and that is all. Then there are in R. pictures of rural innocence which might be apt if applied to Arcadia; under the oaks of Germany no nymphs were born as under the myrtles in Tempe. And what, in a picture, is most insufferable is want of truth. A fable has its truth, and must have it, else it would be no fable. And when the subject is so hashed up one grows afraid. Then our friends think the outlandish costume must produce effect. If the piece is bad, of what use are the fine clothes of the actor? When Ossian sings in the spirit of his times, I can willingly make use of a commentary to explain his costumes, and can take great pains about it; but when modern poets strain their wits to present their poems in an old dress, it does not suit my humour to strain my wits to translate it into modern language. Gerstenberg's "Skalde" I should long ago have gladly read, but for the glossary. His is a lofty spirit, and he has a principle of individuality. One should not judge from his "Ugolino."* I would take this opportunity of observing that grace and lofty pathos are heterogeneous, and no one can unite them so as to produce a worthy subject of a noble art; certainly a subject of lofty pathos is not adapted for painting, that touchstone of grace; and poetry has by no means any occasion to enlarge its bounds, as its advocate† maintains. He is an experienced pleader of his cause; rather a little too much than too little is his mode of thinking. I cannot—I need not further explain myself; you cannot but understand me. When one thinks differently from great minds, it generally is a sign of a small mind. I have no desire to be at the same time one and the other. A great spirit errs as well

* See note † p. 29. † Lessing, in *Laokoon*.

as a little one; the former because it ignores all bounds, and the latter because it takes its horizon to be the whole world. Oh! my friend, light is truth; yet the sun is not the truth, although light flows from it. Night is untruth. And what is beauty? It is not light, and not night. Twilight, an offspring of truth and untruth—a middle thing. Within its empire is placed a finger-post, so ambiguous, so much awry, that a Hercules amongst philosophers might be misled by it. Here I must stop; for when I come to this subject I begin to ramble, and yet it is my favourite subject. How I should enjoy a few delightful evenings with your dear father! I should find so much to say to him. My present existence is devoted to philosophy. Locked in, solitary, paper and ink, pens and a couple of books form all my apparatus. And, by this simple road, I arrive at a knowledge of truth often as far or farther than others with their library knowledge. A great scholar is seldom a great philosopher; and he who, with much labour, has thumbed the pages of many books, despises the easy, simple book of nature; and yet nothing is true but what is simple, certainly a poor recommendation for true wisdom. Let him who follows the simple path go on his way in silence; humility and prudence best become our footsteps on this path, all of which will eventually meet with due reward. For this thank your dear father; he first moulded my soul in this fashion: time will reward my diligence so that it can carry out that which has been begun by him.

When I once begin to chat, I lose myself, as you do; only I cannot so soon find my way back. In saying I have chatted much, this remark applies more to the present letter than it does to yours. It was a little short.

Be encouraged by me to write. You do not know how much you do for me in occupying yourself for me only a little time. And were it only on account of its seldomness, you ought to keep up a correspondence in the Empire.

Yet one or two trifles before I close. My songs, of which a portion have had the bad fortune to displease you, will be printed at Easter, set to melodies.* I might, perhaps, have taken the liberty of offering a copy to you

* The *Neue Lieder* referred to in the notes pp. 26, 31.

with my autograph, were it not that I know that you are easily moved by some trivialities to invective, as you yourself say at the commencement of your letter, which I think, by the way, I have well understood. It is my misfortune that I am so frivolous, and that I look at everything on its bright side. If you have regarded my songs from the worse side, is that my fault? Throw them into the fire, and do not look at them when printed; only keep me in favour. Between ourselves, I am one of the resigned poets; if the poem does not please you, we will write another.

I should like to write something about Wieland, did I not fear prolixity. It would afford materials enough for another letter. You also have a good deal to tell me, you say in your last letter (which was the first). Well, spend only an hour every week; I will gladly wait a month, and then I hope a friendly packet will console me. You would do me a particular favour if, amongst other things, you would give me some information about the newest agreeable and good works; here one never gets it before a quarter of a year after the fair. Although I have now almost wholly renounced modern literature, and rhymes will no longer flow except after some small excitement, I should not like altogether to forsake neologism all at once. One always keeps one's liking for the trashy reading which in Leipsic often passes muster for learning.

How I should like to pay you a visit at Easter, if I could; or, I tell you what,—do you come here to me, or send me the Papa. We have room for all of you, if you will come. I am quite in earnest. Only ask Master Jung,* he will tell you this is true. And our table expands when we have guests just as well as your own. You will probably not accept this invitation; the Saxon girls are somewhat particular. Well, I will not force you. But if you make me angry, I shall come myself and invite you in person. Will you not accept then? I am, your most devoted friend and servant,

GOETHE.

* See note,* p. 16.

19.—To A. F. Oeser, Leipsic.

Dearest Herr Professor, Frankfort, 14 February, 1769.

At last a letter! It has waited long, and must have waited still longer to bring you the news of my complete recovery. I am really still a prisoner with my illness, although with that greatest hope of being soon released. This new year has opened out for me the first prospect of life since that miserable August, and it seems as if the winter of my nature is to coincide in epoch with this winter. Am I then to be well by Easter, and yet not come to you? I am not coming, Herr Professor. Not at Easter, not at Michaelmas, perhaps not for a year, kind as you are to me. You are willing to have me just the same now, in one year, or in two. What is that, that I must just once more take leave in that way.* No, if I come I will come to stay with you a good time, for the end does not follow the beginning so closely as two follows one. And how could I now be of use to you? Forgive me the vanity, the gratitude (as you will call it) that your pupil would be glad to contribute something to your pleasure. France and Spain send astronomers to California to observe the transit of Venus. If you think of me, think as France does of the astronomers. If you speak of me, speak of me so. You have scattered abroad in the world so many pupils who will never see you again, and so many friends have you sown for yourself; they will all bear fruit. Allow me a preference over many. Do not speak of me as having gone away, speak of me as of one sent forth. If any one asks you, "How is he?" say, "Well, I have provided him with everything that he wants in the way of knowledge and tools, in order to employ the world well, and have sent him on his travels that he may gain knowledge

* A reference, probably, to something which Oeser had written: only a portion of his letter to which this is a reply has been preserved; it is printed by Otto Jahn, and relates chiefly to a criticism by Lessing on a passage in Pliny's *Natural History* concerning the polishing of marble by sculptors. Oeser states that Lessing is mistaken, as may be proved by witnessing the practice of ordinary stone-carvers. This is "the information" referred to by Goethe below. The controverted criticism of Lessing is in *Antiquar. Briefe*, 28, 30 *et seq.*

everywhere, and seek out curiosities everywhere, and at last, after a time, bring them to my museum." "And where is he now?" "Since August in his chamber, which has given him the opportunity of making a prosperous journey to the great straits through which all must go. He will be able to tell us marvellous things about them."

Yes, Herr Professor, if what the world has in store for us will go in accord with my heart, I will return: only do not be impatient if I stay away long, and do you remain as happy as ever in your castle.* And when on a fine summer's evening you are standing at the window, and a man in strange attire comes tramping across the bridge, that is I, the knight-errant, coming to give account of the adventures which he has undergone.

I am joking and allegorizing, and am already enjoying it. Whatever will it be when we are again going round the town in Leipsic? For the present, indeed, my physician has forbidden it and anything through which I might fall into a relapse. More explicitly of these things in my next.

I thank you very sincerely for the information about sculpture: it has made the matter clear to me. Lessing! Lessing! If he were not Lessing, I might say something. I must not write against him; he is a conqueror, and will make nasty wood in Herr Herder's groves† if he arrives there. He is a phenomenon of mind, and, of a surety, these appearances are rare in Germany. Whoso will not give him credit in everything, he is not compelled; only confute him not. Voltaire was not able to do any harm to Shakspere: no smaller spirit will vanquish a greater. Emile remains Emile though the Berlin pastor should go mad; and no Abbé will disparage Origen.

I now conclude or I shall begin a fresh sheet. Remember me to the *Herren* Kreuchauf, Weisse, Clodius Huber[t], Hardenberg, Gervinus; and especially to your wife. My parents are quite your friends. To Herr Weisse my illness excuses me. The longed-for will appear. I am, with the most inexhaustible loquacity nevertheless, your most faithful and devoted pupil, GOETHE.

* The Academy of Design, of which Oeser was director, was in the old castle of Pleissenburg at Leipsic.

† An allusion to Herder's *Kritische Wälder*, the first of which treats of *Laokoon*.

20.—To Friederike Oeser, Leipsic.

Frankfort, 8 April, 1769.

Well, what great crime is it if I beg of you to gossip a little? How do you come to abuse an honourable man who intends nothing, as a villain, because he tells a girl who knows how to employ her tongue in a voluble and agreeable manner, that he knows how to value this pre-eminent gift of her sex? All your vehement accusations do not affect me in the least, and you would have done better not to have grown angry.

And so I have an evil idea of the fair sex? In a certain way, yes! Only you must understand me, and not always interpret in a bad sense.

I know what I have experienced, and I hold experience for the only genuine knowledge. I assure you that, for the few years I have lived, I have acquired a very moderate idea of our sex, and, to say the truth, no better one of yours. Do not take offence at this. You have followed my example; and even you, do you not give me cause to continue in obduracy? You will show me your sex from another point of view! Oh! would that you had left matters as they stood, and your cause would have remained bad, without becoming worse. How then is this new point of view advantageous? Let us see. That every young, innocent heart is thoughtless, credulous, and therefore easily seduced, lies in the nature of innocence. Do you deny that? And do you call that blame, if one states the case as it is; and is it, then, a discredit to your sex to be credulous? It looks as if you thought so. You contradict me, and wish to defend your sex. That not all girls are frivolous, you yourself have proved; that I must confess. But you have helped me to a dangerous argument: the wiser portion then is distrustful. For distrust is the temper of all your letter. How have I deserved this? Oh! suspicion lurks in your own heart and therefore *nonchalant*, upright, honest passages in my letters must be malevolent jesting. My letters are in your hands, and I appeal to them; you will find no malice in them, except what you seek in them.

The opinion of a young lady on works of taste is to me of greater weight than the critique of a critic; the reason of this is patent, and all your eloquence shall not serve to pervert my probity. What do I say when you confess that the lines from Rhingulff * were inserted as an artifice? You can well guess what. I will say you know well how to place your mouse-trap, and that I am glad I have let myself be caught. You can see how straightforward I am. Had you been frank, and had you asked me, I should have told you neither more nor less. Had Herr Gervinus † not been with me here, I should not have known how the matter stood. By his account I learn that the bard was well received in Leipsic, and that he gave universal satisfaction; and I can well see that he has pleased you too, and that I have written evil of your friend. Let it be so. What I have written I have written. Put it down to the account of trade-jealousy, or of my want of feeling, that the bard does not please me. It is all one to me. Enough, I can feel nothing where nothing is conceived. And the republican spirit does not deny itself; Saxony has tempered its roughness and boldness, but has not been able to attune it to the concert of praise. I am indebted to your father for the sense of the ideal; and the distorted attractions of the French will as little rouse me to ecstasy as the insipid nymphs of Dieterich, however naked and sleek they are. Every style has its merits, reckoned by its own standard. I am your most obedient servant on all points; but we will not fall out on this account, Mam'selle. In future, be not so severe against authors, but at the same time do not be so severe against me. How shall I reconcile myself with your sex, if you continue as you have begun. And yet, if you cannot act otherwise, just scold

* See p. 38, *seq.*

† Fried. Gervinus, of Zweibrücken, studied at Leipsic in 1768. According to a letter from Hardenberg to Reich (27 March, 1769), "notre ami Gervinus" was in Langenselbold. In the year 1770 Boie became acquainted with him in Göttingen (*Weimar Jahrb.*, iii., s. 29). Later he was in Holland in friendly intercourse with the renowned philologists Ruhnken, Wyttenbach, and Sante, and put them in correspondence with his Leipsic friend Langer (*Ruhnken, Epp. ad Wyttenbach*, p. 26, Mahne's *Vita Wyttenb.*, pp. 278, 279).—O. J.

on; you are always nice, whether you are friendly or cross.

Your trees at Delis * will now soon be budding, and so long as they are green I do not hope for a letter from you. Meanwhile, I will compel you often to think of me; my spirit shall think so intensely of your groves, that he will appear to you before you expect him, and my letters in prose and verse shall make you more observant of the delights of a country life, in spite of Hirschfeld, the anatomist of nature, should no other subjects present themselves. Herr Regis can hardly be satisfied with us; I am really sorry that so agreeable a man should have found so unpleasant an *accessit* to us on the first occasion. I am—I do not myself rightly know what—but still as much as ever, with all my heart, your friend and admirer,

GOETHE.

21.—To K. SCHOENKOPF.

MY FRIEND, Frankfort, 1 June, 1769.

From your letter to Horn,† I have learnt your

* Dölitz, where Oeser had a country-house.

† In May she had informed Horn of her betrothal to Dr. Kanne, and received a reply, which I subjoin, for comparison with Goethe's letter:—

MOST WORTHY BRIDE,— Frankfort, May 26, 1769.

Without water we should die of thirst; without bread starve; and without matrimony our existence would have scarce half its pleasure. How happy are you, excellent bride, in having resolved to change your condition for one esteemed the most happy by even the most savage nations. As regularly installed pedagogue and publisher of the banns here in Frankfort and in Sachsenhausen, I feel thereat the most cordial delight, and esteem myself especially fortunate that I have the honour of being able to offer my congratulations respectively to the bridegroom as well as to yourself herewith. Human beings seek their greatest pleasure in social intercourse one with the other. This in the case of men alone gives rise to friendship; when ladies are in the case, to love; love to matrimony; matrimony to children: children to grandchildren, and so on. As all this, my dear bride, is likely to be your portion, it naturally causes unbounded delight to my pedagogueish heart. Would to Heaven that I could assist at your wedding, and take the lead of my community in singing the hymn, "How beautiful it is!" As, however, the distance of a hundred and sixty miles will render this impracticable, nothing else remains for me but to metamorphose my official assistance into a poetic effusion, and instead of support and

happiness and seen your joy; what my feelings are, and what my joy is, you can picture to yourself, if you can still picture to yourself how much I love you. Greet your dear doctor, and commend me to his friendship. I might well have considered myself guilty of neglect for not writing long since, had you looked forward with impatience to a letter from me. I knew this, however—and therefore did not write,—that it was a time for you when a letter from me was as little worthy of your attention as the *Erlangen Journal;* indeed, taking all

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melody, send you for the occasion the glad result of my melancholy Muse. Pray, therefore, kindly let me know the day of your marriage, that I may make my arrangements accordingly. Your friend,

HORN,
Schoolmaster and Ludimagister in
Frankfort and Sachsenhausen.

Postscriptum (translated).

King Horn begs to inquire after the state of health of his ministers in the Schoenkopfic house. By these presents he also accords his most gracious permission to such members as have betrothed themselves for the aforesaid holy state of wedlock to complete the marriage as soon as it shall seem unto them fitting, with the legal form and with all due ceremonies. Given at our residence in the city of Frankfort-on-Maine, this 22nd May, 1769.

HORNIUS REX.

But, joking apart, I experience the most heartfelt pleasure when I reflect on the house of Schoenkopf. Papa and Mamma contented, Mademoiselle a bride, and Peter regarding the whole affair with composure; truly it must be very pleasant to me if you know how much sympathy I have always taken in your welfare. Would to Heaven that I could be present at the wedding!—it would certainly come off as merrily again. You know me. Without boasting, I may say that I always play the part of the Merry-Andrew. But now I have lost all taste for enjoyment: you know what I have lost; the life I lead here is altogether miserable. I study as if I were mad, so as to pass away my time. Often I get a letter from Leipsic, and that brightens me up a little; but hardly have I read it than I fall again into my old melancholy. Who knows whether I shall ever in my life get to Leipsic again; whether I shall ever be made as happy as you have made my friend Kanne? I must not yet give up all hope, but my happiness is still very uncertain. My dear friend, do not forget me. Think often in your joy of the unhappy one. Remember me and my Constantia on your wedding day. May you enjoy as much happiness as we now suffer pain. Farewell! and soon console with a letter your sincere friend,

HORN.

Greet the Receiver-General.
Goethe intends writing to you soon. —O. J.

together, I am like a fish out of water, and could swear that,—but swear I will not since you might imagine I am not in earnest. Horn is beginning to improve; on his arrival I could make nothing of him. He is so tender and susceptible for his absent Ariadne that it is comic. He believes in earnest what you have written to him, that Constantia* has grown pale through grief. Talking of becoming pale-faced, one would suppose that his love could not be very strong; for his cheeks are ruddier than ever.† When I assure him that Sophy will take a leaf out of her friend's book, and by degrees learn, &c., &c., he curses me to his heart's content, wishes me and my examples at the devil, and swears that the characters of tenderness which have been engraven on her heart by the might of his love are indelible. The good fellow does not reflect that maidens' hearts cannot be of marble. The most loveable heart is that which loves the most readily, but that which the most readily loves, forgets the most readily. But of that he does not think, and very properly; oh! it is a horrible sensation to see one's love expire. A lover who cannot command attention is not nearly so unfortunate as a forsaken one: the first still cherishes hope, and at least dreads not hate; the other, yes the other—he that has once felt what it is to be cast out of a heart that was altogether devoted to him—shuns even reflecting upon, much less speaking of it.

Constantia is a good girl, and I trust she may find a consoler; not a tiresome one, who says, "Well; so it is, you must be content," but such an one as in consoling is in himself consolation, inasmuch as he replaces all that we have lost. Oh! she will not want one long. Mark my words, my dear friend, and when you see one who so attracts

* Horn had an attachment for Sophia Constantia Breitkopf (unknown to the lady's father), to which he continually referred in his correspondence. She subsequently married Dr. Oehme, and died 1818.—O. J. Her father was a member of the well-known firm of publishers. See *Autobiog.*, bk. viii. etc.

† Horn, writing to Käthchen on 30th June, 1769, says:—My dear friend, you do me injustice when you believe what Goethe in jest wrote to you regarding me. Are, then, ruddy cheeks always the sure sign of the state of our minds? I pray you, my friend, not to blame me for what I do not deserve."—O. J.

her—and goes for walks with her, and—but you know how all happens, when people say that it is not right, then advise me of it,—you can easily imagine how it will please me.

My songs are still unpublished; were they ready I would willingly send you a copy, but I know no one in Leipsic to whom I could entrust it. Give the few groschens they will cost you for my sake, and sometimes when you would think of me, let Peter play one to you. When I wrote these songs, I was altogether a different fellow from what I am now. The poor fox;* were you to see how I employ myself the livelong day, you would be amused.

Writing, particularly to you, has grown distasteful to me. If you do not expressly command it, you need look for no letter from me before October. For, my dear friend, even though you address me as your *dear* friend, and sometimes your *best* friend, yet there is always something tiresome about the best friend. No one asks for preserved beans, whilst fresh ones are to be had. Fresh jack are always most esteemed; but when one fears they may grow stale, one pickles them, particularly if one wishes to take them about. It must seem comical to you when you reflect on all the admirers you have salted with friendship, big ones, and little ones, crooked or straight ones; I laugh myself when I think of them. Yet you must not altogether break off your correspondence with me, since for a fish in pickle I am still good enough.

Apropos, lest I forget it, I send you herewith a trifle of which you can make what you will, either for your own head, or for another person's hands. The neckerchief and fans have not yet advanced a finger's breath. You see I am candid; when I would set to painting,

* Goethe attributed his illness at Leipsic to his irregular manner of life; and he incurred the ridicule of his friends by the warning which he impressed upon them. The allusion to the fox is explained by the following stanza in one of his *Neue Lieder*. Hirzel, p. 110:—

You laugh at me and say, Insane!
The fox who's lost his tail would fain
That all should tails forswear;
But here the fable is not apt,—
The fox whose tail was really trapp'd
Gives warning of the snare.—See Otto Jahn, p. 30.

something sticks in my throat. It is only in spring tide that the shepherd carves on the trees, only in the flower season does one weave garlands. Pardon me; but the remembrance grows too saddening for me, if I try to do that for you which I have done, without being more to you than I am.

I have always told you that my fate depended on yours. You will perhaps soon see how truly I have spoken, perhaps you will soon learn news that you little expected. Greet your dear parents, and whoever belongs to your family. My respects to the Receiver-General.*

I remain as much as possible

Your devoted friend,

GOETHE.

22.—To K. SCHOENKOPF.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Frankfort, 26 August, 1769.

I thank you for the interest you take in my health, and must tell you, for your consolation, that the last report of my illness was not altogether well founded. I find myself pretty well, although often undoubtedly less so than I could wish to be. You may readily suppose that nothing but indisposition prevented my writing to you long since; perhaps other reasons may shortly hinder you from communicating with me. It is curious that a year ago to-day I saw you for the last time; it is stupid how different everything looks in one year; I wager that were I to see you again, I should no longer know you. Three years ago I would have sworn it would turn out differently. We should swear to nothing, I maintain. Time was when I could not cease talking to you; now all my wit will not go far enough to write a page to you, for I can think of nothing that would be agreeable to you. If I only hear from you that you are happy, that you are happy without exception, I shall be pleased. Do you believe it? Horn sends greeting to you; he is more unfortunate than I. But wonderfully as everything is distributed, so his folly aids in curing him of his passion. Farewell, dear friend; greet

* The Receiver-General Richter, also referred to in the Oeser letters. See p. 26.

your dear mother and Peter for me. I am in a disagreeable mood to-day. Were I in Leipsic, I would sit at your side, and make a grimace. You may remember some such scenes of old. But no; were I now beside you, how happy I should feel life. Oh! that I could recall the last two years and a half. Käthchen, I swear to you, my dearest Käthchen, that I would act more wisely.

G.

23.*—To Gottlob Breitkopf,† Leipsic.

God give thee good even,
Brother Gottlob. [Frankfort, August, 1769.]

That you are an honest, hearty good fellow, and that you are distinguishing yourself, so say all the people who come from Leipsic; and highly delighted I am that you are not in any way changed, except to your own advantage; for you were of old a good lad, with shrewd sense, and thoughts such as those of a man who comprehends his subject, and ideas not like everyone's. Pay us a visit soon. The girls here are all on your side; I have given them such a full account of you, and there are some merry-pates among them who fancy there is perhaps something to be made of you. Just write to me, dear brother, and let me know in what circumstances you are now.

I am living tolerably,—content and quiet. I have half-a-dozen angels of girls whom I often see, and with none of them have I fallen in love; pleasant creatures they are, and they make my life uncommonly pleasant. He that had not seen Leipsic might be happy enough here; but Saxony—Saxony! Ah!—ah!—that is full flavoured tobacco! Be one never so hearty and strong in that confounded Leipsic, he burns away as quickly as a bad pitch-link. Well, well, the poor little fox will doubtless recover by degrees.‡

One thing I must say to you, and that is, beware of

* Printed in the *Fragmenten aus einer Goethe-Bibliothek*, p. 3.—O. J.

† Christoph Gottlob, son of Johann Gottlob Immanuel, and grandson of Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, who was the founder of the firm of publishers at Leipsic. The brother referred to in this letter was Bernhard Theodor, who set the *Neue Lieder* mentioned note * p. 31 to music.

‡ See above, p. 50.

dissoluteness. It happens to us men-folk with our powers, as to maidens with honour, when once virginity goes to the deuce, it is off. It is true it may be in a measure quack-salved; but all that helps but a little.

Adieu, my dear brother. Keep me in your heart, and do not forget me. In the spring I go to Strasbourg. Who knows whether we shall hear anything of each other there? Write me before then; and if brother Bernhard will not do so, let him give you any message he may have for me, and include it in your letter. Greet Stock and his lady, and tell him he made right pretty things.*

GOETHE.

24.—To K. SCHOENKOPF.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, Frankfort, 12 December, 1769.

A dream reminded me last night that I owe you a reply. Not as if I had so completely forgotten it; not as if I never thought of you; no, my friend, every day says something to me of you and of what I owe. Yet it is strange, and a sensation which you too perhaps will know, the memory of absent friends becomes dimmed, although not effaced by time. The distractions of our life, acquaintance with fresh objects, in short every change in our condition, works upon our hearts as dust and smoke on a painting, making the finely-drawn lines quite imperceptible, whilst one does not know how it happens. A thousand circumstances bring you before my mind, a thousand times do I see your image, but as faintly, and with as little feeling as if I thought of some stranger. It often occurs to me that I owe you a reply, without my experiencing the slightest desire to write to you. When I now read your kind letter, already some months old, and see your friendship and care for one so unworthy, I am shocked at myself; and then only feel what a sad change must have come over my heart, when I suffer that to pass by without gladness, which formerly would have raised me to the heavens. Pardon me for this. Can one blame a miserable being because he cannot rejoice? My wretchedness has made me proof against the good that still remains to me. My body is restored to health, but my mind is not yet

* The engraver, see *Autobiog.*, bk. viii.

healed. I enjoy a quiet inactivity, but that is not to be happy. In this state of rest my power of conception is so tame, that I can form no image of that which of old was so dear to me. It is only in my dreams that my heart sometimes appears to me as it is; a dream only can recall those sweet pictures, so recall them that my impression becomes living; as I have already said, you are indebted to a dream for the present letter. I saw you; I was beside you as of old; it was too strange for me to tell you about it. In a word, you were married. Could this be so? I took up your dear letter, and found the time corresponded. Should it prove so, oh! may this be the beginning of your happiness.

When I reflect on this unselfishly, how does it gladden me to know that you, my best friend, you before all others who envied you, who thought more of themselves than of you, are in the arms of an estimable husband, to know that you are happy, and freed from all the unpleasantness to which a single existence, and especially your single existence, was exposed. I am thankful to my dream for having vividly pictured to me your happiness, and the happiness of your husband, and his reward for having rendered you so happy. Preserve for me his friendship, that you thereby may remain my friend, for now in friends even you must have community. If I may believe my dream, we shall see each other again, but I hope not very soon yet; and as far as I can I shall strive to defer its fulfilment, if a man may seek to resist fate. I formerly wrote to you somewhat ambiguously as to what was to become of me. I can now tell you more plainly, that I shall change my present residence, and remove farther from you. Naught more shall remind me of Leipsic, save perhaps some fitful dream: neither friend who comes there, nor letter. And yet I feel that this will not help me. Patience, time, and distance may effect what nothing else may avail; then blot out all unpleasant reminiscences, and restore to life that friendship with the pleasure with which, after a lapse of years, we shall regard each other with other eyes, but with the same heart. Till then, farewell! Yet not quite till then. Within a quarter of a year you shall have another letter from me, which will acquaint you with my

destination, and the time of my departure, and once again tell you, if needlessly, that which I have already told you a thousand times. I pray you not to reply, but to let me know, through my friend, if you would have anything more from me. This is a sad request, my dearest one, the only one of your sex I may not call friend, for that is a title without significance in respect to what I feel. I desire as little to see your handwriting as to hear your voice; sad enough it is to be so haunted by my dreams. You may count on yet one letter from me: this I will hold sacred; a part of my debt shall be discharged, the remainder you must still excuse. Fancy that all our connexion has ceased when I have made good this last point.

The large book you want shall be sent you. I am glad that you have asked this of me: it is the most splendid gift I could make you; a gift which will preserve me longest and most worthily in your memory.

I can send you no nuptial ode. I had composed several for you, but they gave either too much or too little expression to my feelings. And how could you desire of me a worthy song for a joyous festival? For sometime—yes, for a long time past—my verses have been as peevish and as ill-conditioned as my head, as you will observe from most of those already printed, and will see too from the remainder if they should be printed.

I will very soon send you Hagedorn* and some other books. May you take as much pleasure in the verses of this delightful poet as he deserves. For the rest, commend me to your dear mother and to your now no longer little brother, who will doubtless by this time have become a good musician. Remember me to all kind friends, and recall me in some measure to the memory of your circle.

Farewell, dearest friend; receive this letter with love and kindness. My heart could not but speak once more at a time when I was informed only by a dream of an occasion which might have forbidden it. A thousand times farewell, and think occasionally of the tenderest devotion of your

GOETHE.

* The second edition of Von Hagedorn's collected works was published at Hamburg, 1769.—O. J.

25.—To K. Schoenkopf.

My dear Friend, Frankfort, January 23, 1770.

Indeed it was fully my intention, when I wrote my last letter, never again to take pen in hand to write to you. But, in old times, it was frequently my full intention not to do something, and Käthchen could make me do it as she pleased; and if the Doctor's wife possesses the same gift of governing according to her little head, I suppose I must write to Madame Canne, although I had sworn even a thousand times more than I have. If my memory serves me well, my last letter was written in rather a doleful strain; this is again in a more lively tone, as you have given me grace until Easter. Would that you were already married, and Heaven knows what more. But, truly, at heart I am vexed, as you can imagine.

I know not whether you have received the books from me. I had no time to get them bound. And let me recommend the small French one to your notice. You have a translation of it, and I know that you study French a little.

I cannot tell you more of myself than that I am living quietly, and am hearty, healthy, and busy, for I have no maiden in my head. Horn and I still remain good friends; but, as is the case with the world, he has his thoughts and ways, and I have my thoughts and ways; so that a week passes by and we scarcely see each other once.

But, all things considered, I am now fairly tired of Frankfort, and I am going away from here towards the end of March. I see that I must not yet go to you; for if I arrived at Easter you would perhaps not yet be married, and I must not see Käthchen Schoenkopf again if I do not see her other than so. If, then, it is of interest to you, as I believe it is, I am going at the end of March to Strasbourg. Will you also write to me at Strasbourg? You will not play me any prank. For, Käthchen Schoenkopf—well, I know better than anyone that a letter from you is as dear to me as one from any other hand.

You are still the loveable girl, and will also be the loveable wife. And I—I shall remain Goethe. You know what that means. When I mention my name, I mention

my whole self; and you know that, as long as I have known you, I have only lived as part of you.

Before I leave here you shall have the book not yet sent. And I shall be a fan and a neckerchief in your debt until my return from France.

In Strasbourg I shall remain; and there my title will be changed, like your own; both will acquire something of the *Doctor*.

From Strasbourg I go to Paris, where I hope to enjoy myself, and perhaps stay some time. And afterwards?—God knows whether anything is to come. Well now, if it is not at Easter, it will be at Michaelmas; and if it does not happen at Michaelmas, I shall certainly not hang myself.

How would it be if I brought you the fan and the neckerchief, and could still say Mdlle. S., or Käthchen S. I should then be doctor also, and, what is more, a French doctor.* And, after all, there would be a mighty small difference between Frau Doctorinn C.† and Frau Doctorinn G.

In the meantime, farewell; and greet for me Father Schoenkopf, and dear Mother, and friend Peter.

My connexion with the Breitkopfs, as with all the world, has almost ceased. It is true I received letters just lately, but I have not the heart to reply.

Stenzel still loves Riepel the Peguan‡ to distraction, which strikes me as foolish and absurd; you can suppose why. "The grapes are sour," said the fox. It might actually end in a wedding yet, and that would be a sight. But I know another wedding that would be a still greater sight; and yet it is not impossible, only improbable.

Our arrangements here are excellent. We have a whole house; and if my sister marries, she must quit. I will suffer no brother-in-law. If I marry, my parents and I will divide the house between us—I getting ten rooms, all well and handsomely furnished after the Frankfort taste.

Well, Käthchen, it really looks as if you would not have me: court one of your acquaintances for me, whichever is

* Strasbourg, the reader will remember, was from the treaty of Utrecht until 1871 a French city. † i.e. Canne or Kanne.

‡ Constantia and Horn are here referred to. Horn was called "the Peguan" in jest: Pegu being in Saxon phraseology the equivalent of the land of fools or buffoons.

most like you. For what of my journey? In two years I am back again. And after that! I have a house; I have money. Heart, what dost thou still desire?—A wife.

My dear friend, adieu. To-day, for once, I have been merry, and have written badly. Adieu, my best one.*

26.—To Assessor Christian Gottfried Hermann,† Leipsic.

Dear Herr Assessor, Frankfort, 6 February, 1770.

I thank you for the little note of reminder. I see that you still love me, and I am very glad of it, for I still love you as much as ever, and often think of you. That I have not written will be explicable to you. New way of life, new acquaintance; and in addition to that you can picture to yourself how much he has to do to bring his knowledge into order, who for three years at Leipsic has been intent on studying the *good* studies.

Towards the end of March, I shall again be taking wing. In the first place to Strasbourg, where I would gladly have my juristic efforts crowned. Thence I shall march (*salvis accidentibus*) on Paris. And from there—God knows. And do you keep me in continual remembrance until at length I come again.

If anything amongst my songs has pleased you, I am glad of it. I hope that in time I shall do something better: with us *quasi modo genitis*, people must have patience. Painting and music and whatever is termed art is still always as near my heart as ever. What is Oeser about? I have not heard from him for a long time: give

* On March 5, 1770, Horn wrote: "Goethe this time sends greetings. He is going to Strasbourg." And on April 9: "Goethe arrived at Strasbourg a week ago. I accompanied him as far as Mainz. He will probably soon write to you once more." This, however, did not happen, although he had not forgotten her.—O. J.

† Goethe had made the acquaintance of Dr. Hermann at Schoenkopf's table, to which he had been introduced by G. J. G. Scholosser. He is described in the Autobiography as having passed through his academical course with the greatest credit and regularity. He speedily obtained the position of assessor or assistant judge, and afterwards that of *Bürgermeister*. He was also a man of considerable humour, and accomplished in music and drawing. Goethe experienced much kindness from him, especially during his severe illness (see *Autobiog.*, bk. viii.)

him the most friendly message. I will write to him once more before I leave here.

Herr Reich sent me by the stage the "Dialogues of Diogenes," and I read it in the stage: it was the most welcome present that he could have made me. The engravings are excellent, and the book is by *Wieland.* One must mention his name, for to depict or judge of the character, the humour, of this man is not for us to do. Of great men no one should speak but one who is as great as they, so as to be able to see all round them. A small man, if he stands too near, sees single portions well, but nothing of the whole, and if he will survey the whole must stand too far off, where his eyes do not reach to details. Forgive me this allegory. Greet the Receiver-General Richter, to whom I will write as soon as possible; and love me. I am, as at the cottage—as in the green-room—as always, your

GOETHE.

27.—To PHILIPP ERASMUS REICH,* LEIPSIC.

DEAREST HERR REICH, Frankfort, 20 February, 1770.

There are mixed emotions which Mendelssohn † can so correctly draw, and Wieland so sweetly depict, and of which we others must be silent. By one of such it was that I was overcome when I received your kind letter, and the very agreeable gift.‡

Nothing was new to me. For that Wieland is such an author, and you such a publisher, and so kindly inclined towards me, I have been aware of since you and Wieland have been known to me; but to such a degree! and under such circumstances! that was all new to me. My thankfulness you can readily measure by the value of your friendship, the excellence of the book, and the delight which in this Frankfort dearth of good taste must be felt in a very lively degree, when one so quickly gets in one's hands a new book. Hence I gladly abstain from acknowledgments; for certainly you would needs be very tired of listening to oft-repeated thanks, did

* A well-known bookseller at Leipsic: he is not mentioned in the *Autobiography.* He had a country-house at Sellerhausen, a few miles from town, where Goethe often visited him. † See page 63.

‡ Wieland's *Dialoger des Diogenes,* Leipzig, 1770. See last Letter.

not your especial kindness impose respectful silence on all you oblige.

Oeser's discoveries gave me a fresh occasion to bless myself that I have had him for my instructor. Dexterity or experience no master can communicate to his disciple, and a few years' practice in the fine arts produces but moderate results,—moreover, our hand was only his secondary aim; he strove to penetrate our very *souls*, and one must have had none not to have benefited by him.

His instruction will influence my whole existence. He taught me that the ideal of beauty is simplicity and repose, whence it follows that no youth can be a master. Fortunate is it when we have no need to be convinced of this truth by dire experience. Commend me to my dear Oeser. After him and Shakspere, Wieland is the only man I can acknowledge as my true instructor; others had shown me that I erred, these exhibited to me the way to do better.

I do not suppose that you desire to learn my opinion respecting the "Diogenes." To feel and to keep silence is the utmost that I can do at present; for one ought not to praise a great man unless one is as great as he.* But I have been much vexed on Wieland's account; and I think with reason. Wieland is so unfortunate as often not to be understood,—the fault possibly is often his own, but often it is not, and it is then annoying if people retail their misunderstandings to the public as explanations. Very recently a critic wrote, "The speech of the Man in the Moon† is a subtle satire on the philosophy and follies of those times." How could such an idea occur to anyone? Yet, indeed, he has found a companion in the person of the translator of Agathon, *Tableau des Mœurs de l'ancienne Grèce*. Some such is his title.‡ I verily believe the good man took the book for a work on archæology.

I know not whether Wieland is also annoyed at this; he certainly has cause to be so.

* Cf. preceding letter to Assessor Hermann.

† Diogenes, 34. Op. XIII., p. 141.

‡ *Histoire d'Agathon, ou Tableau philosophique des Mœurs de la Grèce, imité de l'Allemand de M. Wieland*, Lausanne, 1768.—O. J.

When you write to your friend this great author, or see him, be kind enough to make him acquainted with an individual who, it is true, is not man enough to be able to value his inestimable services, but yet has a sufficiently sensitive heart to honour them, and who, with the sincerest regard, also calls himself your most devoted servant,

GOETHE.

28.—TO JOHANN CHRISTIAN LIMPRECHT,* LEIPSIC.

DEAR LIMPRECHT, Strasbourg,† Good Friday, 12 April, 1770.

I do not for a moment doubt that you will now be in want of money, for it has occurred to me to-day, in a very strange way, to send you the louis-d'or. It is still better than nothing, methinks, if it is not much: accept it at least as a sign that what is *fore-gone* is not *forgotten*.

I am again studious, and have, thank God, as much health as I want, and cheerfulness in abundance. As I was so am I still, except that I stand somewhat better with our Lord God and with his dear Son Jesus Christ. Whence it follows then that I am somewhat wiser, and have experienced what this means—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Verily we sing first the hosanna to him who *cometh* yonder; well and good: even that is joy and gladness; the king must first approach before he mounts the throne. For the rest, I want to hear that your circumstances have improved. You have always had a heavy burden in the world, and more latterly with your eyes and me. I do not mean my illness,—that was a labour of love, and love's labours are never burdensome; but, when I recollect what an unbearable fellow I was for the last summer, it seems to me a marvel how anybody could have endured me. Yet I deserved pity. I also had my *cherished* burden.

* Limprecht was a poor theological student, who occupied neighbouring apartments to Goethe's in the "Feuerkugel" at Leipsic. He is described in the *Autobiography*, bk. vi. (though his name is not given there), as having injured his eyes by excessive reading, and by his habit of studying by twilight or moonlight in order to save oil.

† Goethe reached Strasbourg on 2 April.

Farewell, and accept the letter as I write and send it, without ceremony and with an undivided heart.

Greet all friends, and remain mine.

GOETHE.

29.—To J. C. LIMPRECHT, LEIPSIC.

Strasbourg, 19 April, 1770.

YESTERDAY I received your kind letter of the 28th March, and so only a few days after the strange fancy which, just as it occurred to me and was carried out on Good Friday night, I here forward to you.

I am glad to hear that you are all alive and preaching, and if you devote yourself to that you must contrive to get through the world without eyes. It is said that Democritus blinded himself so as not to be distracted by this dangerous sense, and in truth if he could do it, he was not wrong: I would often give something to be blind. And yet if it is the case as heretofore that you see twilight where others have day, you do not lose much. For it is indeed all twilight in this world: a trifle more or less; one may console oneself for that.

I am altered, much altered, for which I thank my Saviour; that I am not what I am said to be, I am also thankful for. Luther says, "I am more afraid of my good deeds than of my sins." And when one is young, one is nothing completely.

I have now been a fortnight here, and find Strasbourg not a hair's breadth better or worse than all that I am acquainted with upon this earth,—that is to say, very ordinary,—and yet it has certain aspects which can give one an impulse towards good and evil, and take one out of one's usual condition.

Adieu. GOETHE.

30.—To THE YOUNGER HETZLER.*

[Strasbourg], 14 July [1770]

TRAPP thinks me dead; and what will you think me? for I have owed you an answer longer than him. But you know me too well, dearest friend, to have to rake up an improbable reason for my silence. I am always

* Neither Hetzler is mentioned in the *Autobiography*

more negligent than busy; and because I had nothing to do, or wished for nothing to do, your letter also remained unanswered. Now at last am I just going to say to you that I love you, and that I am glad to see you still, as ever, a vigilant scholar of the Muses. You are a kind fellow to me, and hold me dear; but you esteem me as too wise and yourself too little, when you propound questions to me which, whilst they are very easy to your experience and your own feelings, I can answer to you neither clearly nor shortly. Only a little patience; and, if I may counsel you, you will get more profit from trying to find where beauty is, than in anxiously inquiring what it is. Once for all, it remains undemonstrable; it appears to us, as in a dream, when we behold the works of the great poets and painters, in short, of all feeling artists; it is a hovering, shining, shadowy form, the outline of which no definition holds.

Mendelssohn* and others, whose pupil our Rector is, have tried to catch beauty like a butterfly, and to fasten her down with pins for curious beholders. They have succeeded; yet it has not happened otherwise than in butterfly catching,—the poor creature trembles in the net, rubs off her finest hues; and even if one does catch it unspoiled, yet in the end it perishes there, stiff and lifeless: the corpse is not the whole animal, there is still something that appertains to it, still a corner-stone, and in this case as in every other, a very chief corner-stone—life, the spirit that makes everything beautiful.

Enjoy your youth and be glad to see butterflies flitting round the flowers, while heart and eye are filled thereat. And leave that joy-killing search for knowledge—the butchered birds and anatomized flowers—to old and cold people. I constrain myself to break off here; you know that I am as inexhaustible on this subject as a widow in the details of her late husband's last hours; and also that I am especially glad to speak with you thereof, because we understand one another.

Müller's Introduction to the classical writers is too comprehensive; there must be many others, but I do not know of any suited to you: it is best to read the authors first, and

* Moses Mendelssohn of Berlin, the friend of Lessing: he was great-grandfather of the musician.

then the Introduction as epilogue; we learn better to esteem them and to use our own judgment. Yet I should like you to consult the Rector in these matters; he must anyway know better than I. Literary knowledge is gained by time and diligence, and in both a youth must give place to a man. So it is also with Homer. The English edition, with Clarke's translation, is dear; the Leipsic reprint must have many errors of the press; of that too I cannot judge.

Farewell.

31.—To Augustin Trapp.*

[Strasbourg], 28 July [1770].

I know nothing. You have known that, I should think, a long time, and yet you are always inquiring of me, and are surprised when I do not answer. Gladly as I communicate with my friends, and especially with you, yet my unmethodical mode of life withholds me so much from doing it; so that whenever I come upon the letters that have to be answered, and find questions and inquiries to which I am not equal, my laziness gladly seizes upon this excuse and puts off an answer into the far distance. I live somewhat for the day, and thank God for it; and often, if I dare, his Son too, that I am in circumstances which seem to impose this upon me. How can you wish me to advise you in a situation which goes so far beyond my experience, and that too when I know not how, nor anyone else?

What, then, can I do, to discuss whether it is well for you to marry or not? Dear friend, such general reflexions make neither the one nor the other wiser than he is, and of your special case I know far too little to be able to have a single correct idea. This is altogether one of those occasions upon which our prudence, wisdom, subtilty or distrust, however you like to call it, is least available. He who cannot, like Eliezer, with perfect resignation in the all-pervading wisdom of his God, leave the fate of an

* See former Letters 6 and 7. Schöll (*Briefe und Aufsätze*, p. 34) prints an imperfect draft of a letter addressed to a certain T., which he considers may have been intended for Trapp, but superseded by the following letter. In the same volume p. 23 is a draft of what may have been a letter to a female friend, but, as its motive and destination are altogether uncertain, it is omitted.

entire future world to the drinking of the camels * is in sad case; there is no help for him. For how would he be advised who will not let himself be advised by God?

In truth, it will be with you, dear friend, as with all of us young men. We will not let our fathers do our courting for us, and are not easily to be called abroad when our bride is coming. Our affections—what ought we to do in respect to them? They are fools, these immature emotions of our hearts, and you know what happens, if one lets one's self be led by the nose by such comrades.

I could here bring many a fair floweret, many a good moral thought, indeed many a politic one too, to bear, upon this occasion, did I not know so well the value of the words. Reflexions are very slight ware; prayer, on the other hand, is a very profitable business; a single upraising of the heart in the name of Him whom we call *a God* for the time, until we may be able to call him *our God*, and we are overwhelmed with countless benefits.

One thing more. In what condition is your health? I beseech you, do take thought for this body with steadfast fidelity. The soul must see through these eyes alone; and if they are dim, the whole world is beclouded.

I, perhaps, know that as well as anyone. There was a time when the whole world seemed as full of thorns to me as it now does to you. The heavenly Physician has strengthened the fire of life in my body again, and courage and joy are again there.

So too will it be with you when you are at your best. And if you cannot quite agree with me, you need not make yourself unhappy about it: only be persuaded of the perfect truth that I am your faithful friend.

32.—To the younger H.—— †

August 24 [1770].

You have, as ever, too much affection and kindness for me: it makes me sad: how long have I been wishing

* See Genesis xv. 2 and xxiv. 14. Eliezer of Damascus was Abraham's steward.

† Probably Hetzler.

to tell you this! I derive no advantage from the all-too-favourable idea of me which you have concocted. It is an old truth, an unfailing experience, which makes me thus afraid. Take good care of this letter: I might perhaps have reason to appeal to it at some future time. I have wished that you may remain my friend, but to that end you must first estimate me at what I really am, so that you may not in course of time change your sentiments with your opinion.

Your affection for me has attributed to me merits which I do not possess. One loves one's friends like one's maiden; and each one's Phillis is the most beautiful to each, so prone are we always to desire the best.

We are parted. Separation is a powerful destructive powder, and your heart cannot remain empty.

You are going to the University: the first thing you will find is a hundred people like myself. So, after all, he was not the only one! you think; and you go further, and find a hundred better than me: you measure me by a new standard, discover faults all over, and then I am undone. Him whom one has considered perfect, and finds wanting on one side, one does not easily judge with kindness.

Our vanity is thus brought into play: we have deceived ourselves, and will not confess it; and we flatter ourselves that we have been deceived: whereupon we cast all the blame, ill-temper, and a sort of hatred, upon an unfortunate wretch who is not in the least responsible for the fact that our precipitancy took him for something for which he had no wish to be taken.

In general, in order to see the world aright (for which you certainly testify a desire), one must estimate it neither too low nor too high. Love and Hate are indeed nearly allied, and both cause us to see indistinctly.

If I do not take care, I shall begin to talk twaddle. We will not aim at hitting the middle path so long as we are young. Let us perform our daily task, and not dabble in the work of our elders.

To look at things as well as we can, to inscribe them in our memory, to be observant and let no day pass without gathering something: then to apply one's self to those

branches of knowledge which give the mind a sure direction, to apportion everything to its own place, to assign to everything its value (in my opinion a genuine philosophy and a fundamental *mathesis*), this is what we have now to do.

Moreover, we must desire *to be* nothing, but to *become* everything; and must especially not stand still and rest more frequently than the need of a tired mind and body claims. I know well that for both of us there are not always facilities for doing what we ought; but if we recognize our opportunities a little, and know our strength, a noble sentiment readily arouses our courage again. One's morning indolence is soon gone, when one has once persuaded one's self to put a foot out of bed, &c.——

33.—To Fräulein von Klettenberg.*

Gnädige Fräulein, 26 August [1770].

I have been to-day to the Holy Communion, to keep in mind the passion and death of our Lord; and you can guess why I am amusing myself this afternoon, and at last intending in earnest to write a letter already so long delayed.

We treat our best friends as we are accustomed to treat God himself: every love has its collectanea; and I would sooner that rejected brass tokens were again collected than scattered thoughts; and especially here, in the circumstances in which I am now.

And yet it is not little that they seem to promise me. The many people whom I see, the many accidents which cross my path, afford me experiences and knowledge of which I have never let myself dream. Moreover my body

* This lady, Susanna Katharina v. Klettenberg, was the daughter of a former chief magistrate of Frankfort, and she seems to have been a distant connexion of Goethe's mother, for an uncle of the latter, Colonel Johann Nicolaus Textor, married a lady of the Von Klettenberg family. (See Madame Belli's *Leben in Frankfurt*, iv. 94.) Of her religious opinions and their influence on Goethe much is said in the eighth book of the *Autobiography*. She is also depicted in the Confessions of a Beautiful Soul, in *Wilhelm Meister* See *Autobiog.* bk. viii. (trans. i. 290), and *W. Meister*, i. 333

is just robust enough to bear moderate and needful labour, and to remind me occasionally that neither in body nor mind am I a giant.

My connexion with the religious people here is not exactly firm: at the beginning I had turned myself very firmly towards them, but it seems as if it could not be. They are so mortally prosy when they begin, that my liveliness could not endure it. Mere people of moderate intellect, who thought their first rational thought with their first sentiment of religion, and now think that that is everything because *they* know nothing else, withal so Halleish* and so hostile to my Count,† so orthodox and methodical, that——. I need just say nothing more to you.

Something may still be added: the preference for our own feelings and opinions, the conceit of wishing to twist everyone's nose in the direction in which our own has grown—failings to which such people as are well off give way with the greatest safety.

How often have I heard —— mix up the interest of his own whims and God's interest, as he was rebuking my cousin. I like the man—we are good friends; but, even as father of a family, he is too strict; and you can fancy what happens when he wishes to have the more subtle duties of religion observed by his rough young people.

Another acquaintance exactly the opposite of this one has been of no little use to me hitherto. I must go through all the classes; so it seems, dear lady.

Herr ——,‡ an ideal for Mosheim § or Jerusalem ‖, a man who has gone through much experience with much sense; who, with the cool-bloodedness with which he has

* *I.e.* akin to the tone of thought in the University of Halle, which was equivalent to "narrow-minded."—SCHÖLL.

† Count Zinzendorf. Comp. *Autobiog.*, bk. viii. (trans. i. 290), also *Wilhelm Meister*, bk. vi. Nicholas Louis, Count Zinzendorf, was the protector of the Moravian sect of Herrnhüters, and, having received episcopal ordination, became their bishop. He died in 1760.

‡ Schöll supposes this to refer to Dr. Salzmann. See note, p. 75.

§ The well-known ecclesiastical historian, who died in 1755.

‖ A Protestant clergyman, who held the secularised endowment of the Abbey of Riddagshausen. He is described in the *Autobiography* as one of the first theological scholars and writers. He was the father of the young Jerusalem, the friend of Lessing, whose romantic suicide occasioned Goethe's famous novel, *Werther*. See below, Letter 71.

always regarded the world, thinks that he has found out that we are set in this world especially to be useful to it, that we are able to make ourselves capable of this, whereto Religion also affords some aid; and that the most useful man is the best. And all that follows therefrom.

The day after to-morrow is my birthday; * a new epoch will hardly commence with it. Be it as it will, pray with me, for me, that all may turn out as it should.

Jurisprudence begins to please me much. Thus is it with everything as with Merseburg beer: one shudders the first time, but if one has drunk it a week, one cannot give it up again. And Alchemy is still as ever my secret love.†

Still as much as ever the old madcap! the——

34.—To Herr Engelb[ach].‡

10 September, 1770.

Everyone has his turn in the world, as in a peep-show. Is the Emperor with the army taken past? stare at them, spy at them: here comes the Pope with his illustriousness. I have now played out my part in the lecture-room. Herewith are your MSS., which have rendered me good service.

How you are living, I can imagine; with me all is *ut supra*. One continues to be welcome in the B. household. The A. and I are going to be married as soon as possible. The whole table greets you. All the youngsters in the town are manufacturing kites, and I am sweating *par compagnie* at my disputation. May you be happy! Remember me: remind my friends, too, that I am still in existence, and hold you all dear.

* His 21st birthday.

† See *Autobiog.*, bk. viii (trans. i. 292.)

‡ Engelbach is mentioned in the Autobiography in conjunction with Weyland, who was related to the wife of Pastor Brion of Sesenheim. Goethe did not know the Brion family until the following month, so that the reference cannot be to them. It is probably to some family with whom the Actuarius (Salzmann) was also intimate.

35.—To the elder Herrn H.*

28 September [1770].

To begin to notice and to be noticed is a curious crisis in our life, dear friend. The first moral glance into the world no more brings to our head or our heart a definite sensation than the first physical one. One sees before one knows that it is seen, and only a very long time afterwards does one learn to *know* what one sees. Rejoice that you have still long to live before the thought comes to you that there is nothing more in the world to see.

Time goes slowly with you, I suppose. When one does nothing else but while it away, it must of necessity often be a burden; and you are such a wicked fellow that you like avoiding trouble. At least, I do not know whether hitherto you have not been willing to make use of the fine gifts of which you are conscious, or whether you have not yet found opportunity enough to be able to be willing.

The academical years which are now awaiting you ought by rights to give occupation to your whole mind. It is this time which, well or ill-employed, affects a man's whole after-life. Well! we shall see each other again, and then we will talk of the past, which as yet is still in the future.

You will in many things change your modes of thought: I only ask you to keep steadfast your love for me, and let separation be only separation,—a cloud which draws between objects, and, without changing them, makes their shape undistinguishable, &c.

36.—To Mam'sell F.†

14 October [1770].

Shall I once more tell you that I am still alive and well, and as content as a tolerable condition allows, or shall I remain silent and rather not think of you for shame? I trow not. To receive forgiveness is to my heart as sweet as to earn thanks—yes, even sweeter, for the sensation is more unselfish. You have not forgotten

* Probably Hetzler, an elder brother of the correspondent to whom Letter 30 is addressed.

† The lady to whom this letter is addressed has not been identified.

me, that I know; I have not forgotten you, as you know, in spite of a silence the length of which I cannot account for. I have never so vividly experienced what it is to be contented without the heart having any inclination as now,—as here in Strasbourg. An extensive acquaintance amongst pleasant people, a lively, merry social circle, chases away one day after the other, leaves me little time to think and no repose for feeling; and when one does not feel, one certainly does not think of one's friends. Enough, my present life is exactly like a sleigh-drive, showy and tinkling, but affording just as little for the heart as it offers much to eyes and ears.

You would hardly guess how the idea of writing to you so unexpectedly comes to me, and, as the reason is a nice one, I must tell it to you.

I have been spending a few days in the country with some pleasant people.* The society of the amiable daughters of the house, the beautiful neighbourhood, and the most favouring weather, have awakened in my heart every slumbering feeling, every remembrance of all that I love; so that I have scarcely returned than here I am sitting already and writing to you.

And thereby you can see how far one can forget one's friends when one is happy. It is only immoderate, unenviable good fortune that makes us forget ourselves, that even clouds the thoughts of a loved one: but when one feels one's self completely, and quietly enjoys the pure pleasures of love and friendship, then, by a peculiar sympathy, every interrupted friendship, every half-severed tenderness, at once comes to life again. And you, my dear friend, whom, amongst many, I can so name especially,

Letter No. 44, below, is possibly written to the same person or to her sister, for the drafts of both are on the same sheet. Schöll (*Briefe und Aufsätze*) supposes that the F. stands for Fränzchen mentioned in Letter 44, and that both were addressed to this same lady. It has also been suggested that they were written to Friederike Oeser at Leipsic, but the tone is more patronising and less intellectual than that which distinguishes his other letters to her. Possibly the lady was Fräul. Franziska Crespel, who is mentioned as "*our* Fränzchen" in a late letter to Riese, 14 February, 1814.

* This can only refer to the family of Friederike Brion at Sesenheim. See the date of the next letter

accept this letter as a new pledge that I shall never forget you. May you continue happy, &c.

37.—To Friederike Brion, Sesenheim.*

Dear new Friend, Str[asbourg], 15 October [1770].

I do not hesitate so to call you: for if otherwise I understand but very little of the eyes, still, at the first glance, my eye found in yours the hope of this friendship, and for our hearts I would swear. You, tender and kind as I know you, should you not, since I hold you so dear, be a little bit favourably inclined to me in return?

Dear, dear friend,

Whether I have anything to say to you is, perhaps, not in question, but whether I precisely know why on this particular occasion I wish to write, and what I may have to write, that is another thing: thus much do I remark, by a certain inward unrest, that I would gladly be with you; and under the circumstances a scrap of paper is as true a consolation, a winged horse for me here in the midst of noisy Strasbourg, as it can but be for you in your peacefulness, if you feel with real keenness separation from your friends.

The circumstances of our journey back you could imagine pretty well if you were able to see on my departure how sad I was; and if you remarked what a hurry Weyland was in to get home, gladly as, under other circumstances, he would have stayed with you. His thoughts went forwards, mine backwards, and so it is natural that the conversation could be neither pleasant nor interesting.

At the end of the *Wanzenau* † we made a venture to shorten the way, and lost ourselves, by good luck between the marshes: night came on, and nothing was wanting but that the rain, which a short time afterwards came down pretty freely, should have hastened itself somewhat, for then we should have had every reason to be persuaded of the love and fidelity of our princesses.‡

* The story of Goethe's attachment to Friederike is fully given in *Autobiog.*, bks x. and xi.

† Lit. The "Bug meadow."

‡ Doubtless an allusion to some story with which they had amused themselves.

Meanwhile the roll, which, for fear of losing it, I kept in my hand, was a real talisman, which charmed away for me all the difficulties of the journey. And yet?—Oh, I need say nothing, either you can guess it or you would not believe it.

At last we arrived, and the first thought that we had, which had, too, already been our consolation on the way, concluded in a plan of seeing you soon again.

There is something too dear in the hope of *seeing again*. And we others, with our over-indulged hearts, if any little trifle vexes us, straightway come with the remedy and say, "Dear heart, be quiet; you will not be separated long from them, from those people whom you love: be quiet, dear heart!" And then we give it in the meanwhile a shadow, so that it has something, and then it is good and quiet, like a little child whose mamma gives it a doll instead of the apple which it ought not to eat.

Enough, we are not here, and you see that you were wrong. You would not believe that the noise of town would ill please me after your sweet country joys.

In truth, Mam'sell, Strasbourg has never yet appeared to me so empty as now. I hope, indeed, it may be better when time shall have a little obscured the thoughts of our delightful and unrestrained enjoyment; when I shall no longer feel so vividly how kind, how amiable my friend is. Yet should I be able or willing to forget it? No, I will rather keep the little heartache, and write to you often.

And now many thanks still, still many sincere remembrances to your dear parents, to your dear sister many hundreds of ——, what I should like to give you again.

38.—To Frau Schultheiss Textor.

Dearest Grandmama, [Strasbourg, February 1771.]

The death of our dear father,* already dreaded from day to day for so long a time, has yet come upon me

* The father, that is to say, of Goethe's mother, Johann Wolfgang Textor, imperial councillor and chief magistrate (*Schultheiss*) of Frankfort. He died on 6th of February, aged seventy-eight. See *Autobiog.*, bks. i. and ii., *et passim*.

unprepared. I have felt this loss with all my heart; and what is it in the world around us when we lose what we love?

To console myself, and not you, I write to you, you who are now the head of our family, to say you for your love, and assure you of my tenderest devotion. You have lived longer in the world than I, and must find in your own heart more comfort than I know of. You have endured more misfortune than I: you must feel, far more vividly than I can say it, that the most sorrowful occurrence often, through the hand of Providence, takes the most favourable turn for our happiness; that the succession of fortune and misfortune in life is intertwined like sleep and waking, neither without the other, and one for the sake of the other; that all happiness in the world is only lent. You have seen children and grandchildren die before you, ceasing their work in the morning of their life; and now your tears accompany a husband to the everlasting sabbath-rest—a man who has honestly earned his wage. He has it now: and yet the good God, whilst he took thought for him, has also taken thought for you—for us. He has taken from us not the merry, friendly, happy old man who carried on the affairs of age with the vivacity of a youth, who stood out amongst his fellow-citizens, and was the joy of his family: He has taken from us a man whose life we have seen for some years hanging by a silken thread. His energetic spirit must have felt with painful heaviness the oppressive weight of a sickly body; must have wished itself free, as a prisoner yearns to escape from his cell.

Now he is free, and our tears bid him God-speed; and our sorrow gathers us around you, dear mamma, to console ourselves with you, hearts simply full of love. You have lost much, but much remains to you. Look at us, love us, and be happy. May you enjoy for a long time yet the temporal reward which you have so richly earned of our invalid father, who has gone hence to report it at the place of requital, and who has left us behind as tokens of his love, tokens of the past time of sorrowful yet pleasing reflection.

And so may your love for us remain as it was; and

where much love is, there is much happiness. I am, with a truly warm heart, your loving grandchild,

J. W. GOETHE.

39.—To SALZMANN.*

[Sesenheim, May, 1771.]

FOR the honour of God, I am not going to leave the place at present: and as I shall not see you for so long, I think it will be well for you to write how you are. I am now tolerably well; the cough, by means of treatment and exercise, is pretty well reduced, and I hope it will soon depart. But things are not very bright round about me: the little one † continues sadly poorly, and that makes everything look out of joint—to say nothing of *conscia mens*, and not, alas! *recti*, that follows me about. Yet, after all, it is country. Ah! if all were as it should be, you would be here too. But write to me on Friday. And if you would have a box with two pounds of nice sweetmeats (you know better than I what girls like to eat) packed and sent to me, you would give occasion for sweeter faces than we have been accustomed to see for some time.

Just send it with my address, to the arcade, care of the carrier Schöll, early on Friday: he will see to it.

* Dr. Salzmann, a man at this time of more than sixty years of age, held the post of actuary to the *Vogteigericht* or "board of control" of the University of Strasbourg: that is, he stood in some such relation to the students as the college tutor does in an English university. He also dined at the same ordinary as that attended by Goethe, and was in fact regarded as the "president of the table." Hence he and Goethe were brought into intimate relations. See the *Autobiog.*, book ix., &c. The occasion of this and the four following letters is somewhat doubtful. It has been supposed that they were written from some friend's house after the termination of Goethe's tacit engagement with Friederike Brion. But internal evidence favours the supposition that they were written before that event, whilst he was staying with her parents. An allusion in this letter (see note, p. 76) fixes the date within a few days, which was three months before he left Strasbourg, and the tone rather indicates the uneasiness of a doubtful position than the ranklings of an attachment already broken off.

† Probably Friederike Brion.

I danced with the eldest * on Whit Monday,† from two o'clock in the afternoon till twelve o'clock at night, straight off, without any intermezzos for eating and drinking. The Herr *Amt-Schuls* [Justice] von Reschwoog lent his drawing-room; we had secured some jovial fellows, and the fun was fast and furious. I forgot my feverishness, and since then it has been better too.

You ought to have seen it at least. The whole Me steeped in dancing.

And yet if I could say I am happy, that would be better than all.

Who can say, I am the most hapless? says Edgar.‡ That is a comfort, too, dear man. My head is like a weather-cock, when a storm is brewing and the gusts are changeable.

Adieu! Love me. You shall soon hear from me again.

GOETHE.

40.—To SALZMANN.

Wednesday Night.

A WORD or two is, at all events, better than nothing. Here I sit 'twixt door and doorpost. My cough continues: certainly I am in other respects well, but one is only half alive when one cannot breathe. And yet I cannot come to town. Exercise and fresh air, at least help what can be helped, without reckoning ——.

The world is so fair! so fair! for him who could enjoy it! I am often vexed about it, and often read myself edifying lectures about the To-day, about this learning which is so indispensable to our happiness, and which many a professor of ethics fails to grasp, and none propounds well. Adieu, adieu! I wanted to write but a word to thank you for the sweetmeats, and to tell you that I love you.

GOETHE.

* This probably refers to the eldest daughter Salomea, called Olivia in the *Autobiography*, where also she is sometimes spoken of as "the eldest."

† This allusion gives an approximate date, for in 1771 Whit Monday was on May 20th.

‡ EDGAR. "O gods! who is't can say, 'I am at the worst'?"—*King Lear*, iv. 1.

41.—A Monsieur Salzmann, Secrétaire de la Chambre des Tutèles à Strasbourg.

[Sesenheim, June 1771.]

I am coming or I am not, or——. All this I shall know better when it is over than now. It rains without and within, and the unpleasant evening winds rustle in the vine-leaves before the window, and my *animula vagula* is like the weathercock over there on the church tower: "turn thee, turn thee," so it goes on the whole day, although the "bow thee! bend thee!" has been out of fashion here a long time. *Punctum.* To my knowledge this is the first upon this page. It is difficult to make good periods and full-stops at the proper time; girls make neither comma nor full-stop, and it is no wonder if I am assuming a girl-nature.

Yet I am learning Greek finely; for you must know that during the time that I have been here, I have so increased my Greek knowledge that I almost read Homer without a translation.

And then I am four weeks older: you know that that is saying a good deal for me, not because I do *much*, but *many* things.

God bless my dear parents.
God bless my dear sister.
God bless my dear Actuarius.
And all good souls. Amen.

Goethe.

42.—To Salzmann.

[Sesenheim, June 1771.]

It is now about time that I came back. I intend, and intend, but what will intending do against the faces round about me? The condition of my heart is peculiar, and my bodily health wavers through the world, which is more beautiful than I have seen it for a long time. The most charming neighbourhood, people who are fond of me, a round of pleasures. Are not the dreams of thy childhood all fulfilled? I often ask myself, when my eye feeds upon this horizon of delights. Are not these the fairy gardens for which thou didst yearn? They are! they

are! I feel it, dear friend, and feel that one is not a whit the happier when one attains what one has wished for. The make-weight! the make-weight! which fate throws into the balance for us at every happiness. Dear friend, it requires much courage not to be downhearted in the world. As a boy, I planted a little cherry-tree in sport; it grew, and I had the joy of seeing it bloom: a May-frost brought the joy and the bloom to nought, and I had to wait a year: then they grew beautiful and ripe; but the birds had devoured the largest share before I had tasted a single cherry. Another year it was the caterpillars, then a greedy neighbour, then the mildew: and yet when I have a garden of my own I shall again plant cherry-trees. In spite of all misfortunes, there is still enough fruit to satisfy one. I know another pretty story of a rose-hedge which is told of my late grandfather, and which is somewhat more edifying than the cherry-tree tale; but I must not begin it, because it is already late.

Prepare yourself for an eccentric dish, reflexions, sentiments, such as might be properly comprehended under the general title whimsicalities.

Farewell, and if you wish to see me soon again, send me a remittance to set me free, for I have become firmly fixed here.

Seriously, be so kind as to give the woman who brings this a louis-d'or; I had not prepared myself for so long a time. Write to me, please, and kindly put it into the letter, and give the bearer strict injunctions. Adieu, dear fellow, pardon me for everything. Your

GOETHE.

43.—To SALZMANN.

[? Sesenheim, June 1771.]

MY eyes close, it is just nine. Delightful arrangement of things. Revelling yesterday night; lashed out of bed early to-day with plans. It seems as if my head were like my room—I cannot find even a scrap of paper but this blue. Yet any paper does to tell you that I love you; and this doubly: you know what it was meant for.*

Be satisfied until I see you again. Within my heart

* One annotator boldly suggests the sweetmeats. Düntzer, however, refers this letter to a later date.

it is not wholly bright. I am too much awake not to feel that I am grasping after shadows. And yet—to-morrow at seven o'clock my horse is saddled, and then adieu!

44. To ———.*

Saarbruck,† June 27 [1771].

If all, my dear friend, were written down, which I have thought about you as I made the delightful journey hither, and enjoyed all the changes of a splendid summer's day in the sweetest peacefulness, you would have much to read, many a time to sympathize, and often to laugh. To-day it is raining, and in my solitude I find nothing more attractive than to think of you; of *you*, that is to say, of all whom you love, and even of Käthchen, of whom I well know that she will not belie herself, and that she will feel towards my letters as she did towards myself, and that she— Enough, anyone who has seen her only in a *silhouette*, knows her.

We were on horseback the whole day yesterday, and night was approaching as we neared the mountains of Lorraine, where the Saar flows by in the lovely valley below. When I looked to the right over the green depth, and the river flowed so grey and still in the twilight, whilst on my left hand the deep shade of the beech-woods on the mountain hung over me, and the fluttering birds flitted silently and mysteriously through the copse around the dark rocks, my heart felt as still as the place, and all the labour of the day was forgotten like a dream, which one must make an effort to call to mind.

What a blessing it is to possess a light, free heart! Courage impels us to meet difficulties and dangers; but great joy is only earned by great exertion, and that is perhaps the worst I can say against love! we hear it said that it makes courageous—by no means! So soon

* See note to Letter 36.

† This letter was probably written during a tour in Alsace and Lorraine, similar to that described in the *Autobiog.*, book x. Düntzer places it a year earlier, but it follows Letter 36 on the draft from which it is printed, and it will be recollected that the tour in the *Autobiography* is spoken of as subsequent to his introduction to the Brion-, and consequently to Letter 37.

as our heart is tender, it is weak. When it is beating so warmly against the breast, and the throat is as it were tied tightly, and one strives to press the tears from one's eyes, and feels an incomprehensible joy as they begin to flow, then we are so weak that we are fettered by chains of flowers, not because they have become strong through any magic charm, but because we tremble lest we should tear them asunder.

The lover who is in danger of losing his sweetheart, it is true, grows courageous; but that is no longer from love, but from jealousy. When I talk of love, I mean that agitation of feeling in which our heart floats ever hovering to and fro around one spot, whenever any attraction has shifted it out of the ordinary path of indifference. We are like children on their rocking-horses, always in motion, always at work, and never leaving the spot. That is the truest picture of a lover. How dire is love when one is so tortured! and yet lovers cannot exist without torturing themselves.

Tell my Fränzchen * that I am still ever hers. I am very fond of her, and was often angry with myself because she tortured me so little; when one is in love, one wishes to be in fetters.

I know a good friend whose sweetheart had the kindness to make her lover's feet her footstool at table. It happened one evening that he wished to rise before it suited her; she pressed her foot upon his in order to detain him by thus coaxing him: unfortunately she came with her heel upon his toes; he suffered much pain, but still he recognized too highly the value of a favour to draw his foot away.

45.—To Johann Gottfried Herder.†

[? Strasbourg, Summer, 1771.]

It happens to me, in respect to this letter, as to lazy boys with their lesson. they begin to learn when they ought to say it. The past is going, and here is Shake-

* See Letter 36.

† Herder had recently visited Strasbourg, partly for the sake of having an operation performed by Lobstein on his eye; and Goethe had then formed an intimate acquaintance with him. Düntzer places this letter earlier in the year.

speare. It was easier for me to get him than I thought: in a fit of hypochondriacal generosity, my man would have given the hair from his head, especially as it was for you. With it is a letter from Jung;* poor fellow! All the similes from Weisse's 'Julia,' of mildew, May frost, north winds, and worms, could not express the plagues which Kästner's serpent-wand has discharged upon the simple minded Jung. I see from his letter to you more than from our conversation on the subject, how provoked he is; for my own part, I assure you Kästner has gone to work in the affair in such a way that I cannot blame him. Jung feels that, indeed, more strongly than I; takes for satire what are expressions of anger, and for professional jealousy what is professorial criticism. For he has done nothing but send him the book with a letter, in which he shows him at great length why the rubbish could not find a publisher in Göttingen. Afterwards follow some pages of notes, in which (to proceed in due order, like Jung) firstly, I say, the Herr Professor, gardener-like, uproots from the ground the mystico-metaphysico-mathematical weed of Jungianism; then demonstrates the inconvenience of the instrument, the advantages of the Tab[ulæ] Sin[uum], and concludes by adducing several authors, whose similar discoveries have been superseded by means of the Tabulæ. I thought, when I had read Jung's letter, that this account was due to you. After you are gone, I shall be his patron-saint; and I have delivered myself from my innermost heart, because I have found my name after yours adorned with so honourable a VON. It is the first time that I have seen this learned VON before my six letters. So now I have the most immediate expectation of literary ennoblement: I mean the multiplication of my noble self; the Clodiuses, the Schüblers shall see.

Adieu, dear Herder; I am beginning to play the fool. Remain affectionately disposed towards me, and it will ever be only *officium*, not *beneficium*; for you are aware of how dearly I hold you.

Herr Salzmann sends his greetings.

* Afterwards called Stilling. He was studying medicine at Strasbourg. See *Autobiog.*, bks. ix., xvi., and note, p. 90, *below*.

One thing more. I have seen a stuffed woodpecker; it is not a common bird.

And I am, altogether as I am, your friend,

GOETHE.

The day when Peglow * wrote.

46.—To SALZMANN.

DEAR MAN, [Strasbourg, August, 1771.]

The Bedell has already been answered. No! The letter came at a somewhat inconvenient time, and, putting the formalities aside, I have done with my doctorate. I am so sick of the licenciating, so sick of all exercises, that I do what is required of me absolutely only for the sake of appearance; and in Germany both degrees have the same weight.†

I thank you for your forethought: if you would signify it to the Herr Professor, with a little syrup of civility, you would take the latest news, as well as pay a call. Continue to love me and to think of me.

I am sorry for poor *O-ferul.*‡ He had a true heart.

GOETHE.

47.—To SALZMANN.

DEAR HERR ACTUARIUS, [Frankfort, September? 1771.]

Your note gave me the pleasure of letting me see your hand in Frankfort. Here you see mine, and an assurance that I love you. With regard to the copper-plates, rely upon your own eyesight. If the drawing is good, and the engraving nice and black, it is all right. There are two sheets, each about six or eight leaves, *Papillon*, or *Papiller invenit.* Send it to the good Friederike, with or without a note, as you please. What I am doing is nothing at all. So much the worse! As usual, more thought of than done: whereby nothing much will come of me. Whenever I shall produce anything, you shall know of it.

Remember me, &c.

* A Russian, previously known to Herder, who had come to Strasbourg to practise surgery under Lobstein. *Autobiog.*, bk. x.

† Goethe graduated as Licentiate of Laws on 6th August. Düntzer dates this letter a year later, on the occasion of his being offered the degree of Doctor by the Frankfort faculty.

‡ Possibly a nickname. See again, p. 87.

To Herr Silbermann give many greetings from me when you see him. Ask him for a rough copy of the foundation of the Cathedral,* and be so kind as to take the opportunity of asking whether and how one could get a copy of the large plan. I am your old

GOETHE.

48.—To HERDER.

[Frankfort, September? 1771.]

THAT I can give you what you want, and more, probably, than you hope for, gives me an amount of pleasure of which you could think me as little capable as of a real enthusiasm, according to the idea which you must once have had of me. Enough, I have, in fact, brought with me from Alsace twelve ballads, which I have secured in my wanderings from the mouths of the most aged old women. A piece of good luck! for their grandchildren all sing 'I only loved Ismene.' They were intended for you, intended only for you, so that it is no transcript that I have vouchsafed to my best friend at his urgent request. I will not stop to say anything of their excellence, nor to discriminate their merit. But I have carried them hitherto at my heart as a treasure; all maidens who wish to find favour in my eyes have to learn and sing them: my sister shall copy the tunes that we have (N.B. they are the old tunes as God created them), she shall copy them for you. And now in haste adieu, that I may see about the copying.†

Now I am ready and am waiting until the post goes. I hope that the songs will make you happy. And so, adieu. Something shall follow next, about Celtic and Gaelic matters. I am still in want of certain books, which I must manage to get soon. A few *gravamina* in respect to your letter, with which, on the whole, I have reason to be very well content. One in advance: in future make an envelope; there are a few passages more closely sealed than the Revelation of St. John.

No more this time. I am your GOETHE.

* Goethe was much interested in Strasbourg Cathedral. See *Autobiog.*, bk. ix., etc.

† *Le. of Ossian*, referred to again in the following letters.

My sister makes me add one thing more. I am to greet you, and invite you for the 14th of October, when the Shakespeare festival will be celebrated here with great ceremony. You must at least be present in spirit, and, if it is possible, send your essay upon the day, so as to bear a part in our liturgy.

My parents commend themselves to your remembrance.

49.—To Herder.

[? Frankfort, Sept.? 1771.]

I force myself to write to you in the first fulness of feeling. Away, cloak and collar! Your hellebore letter is worth all the daily experiences of three years. That is no answer to it, and who could answer it? My whole being is shaken, as you could imagine, good man, and it still vibrates far too much for my pen to be able to mark firmly. Apollo Belvedere,* why showest thou thyself in thy nakedness, that we must be ashamed of ours? Spanish suit and cosmetic! Herder, Herder, remain to me what you are to me. If I am destined to be your planet, I will be it; be it willingly, faithfully. A friendly moon to the earth. But this—feel it thoroughly—that I would rather be Mercury, the last, rather be the smallest amongst seven who revolve with you about one sun, than the first amongst five who move around Saturn.

Adieu, dear man, I will not let you go. I will not leave you! Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord. And should I be lamed therewith! To-morrow your Ossian shall go. I would pay with —— to be one hour with you now.

I read my letter again. I must seal it at once, or you would not get it to-morrow.†

* Goethe had seen a cast of the Apollo Belvedere and other antiques for the first time at Mannheim on his way home from Strasbourg.

† This letter is conjecturally placed earlier by Hirzel, viz., in the *summer* of 1771. The reference to Ossian, however, seems to connect it with letters of this date.

50.—To Herder.

[Frankfort, September? 1771.]

These passages are all out of the seventh book. If you already have an Ossian, I need not have added that. You will see whether you could agree with me when I say the Reliques * and Ossian's Scotch have quite different effects upon the ear and mind. The uncultured expression, the wild irregularity of the metre (of which, in fact, I cannot say more than that it is irregular), the echoing pleonasm, which, sometimes indeed, Macpherson translates ("*sons of song, of foamy streams*"), but which in the original pervades almost every line (*nan speur, na hoicha, nach beo, nan tend, nan nial*), gives the metre a peculiar beat, and the form an impressive harmony: the whole together diverges so far from the English old ballad rhythm, from its polish, &c.,† that you will find it all better than I can say. It is, in general, superfluous to tell people like you one's opinion, if you have yourselves thought about, or are going to think about, any matter. Thus much you may hereby see, that I have been busying myself here with you and for you for some time, and that I am not one of the last for whom you write. If you wish to have still more translated from the Scottish, write and say so. If you can't get hold of an Ossian, mine is at your service; but I must have it back. Let me know soon, for I cannot possibly see you still going without so much pleasure as I am enjoying—for, indeed, nothing surpasses it. You shall have the German ballads. Eschenburg is a miserable fellow. His translation (that is to say, of the passages of Shakespeare) merits no attention: it is abominable. The treatise itself I have not read, and shall do so with difficulty. Only send yours for the 14th

* After finishing my letter, I have read the passage in yours in which you speak of Ossian, and feel that I ought to have said nothing until I had read your treatise. It may be so. Only you might have thought from this that I did not understand you.

† In reference to the first volume published by Macpherson, which is assumed to be in some measure a paraphrase of genuine ancient Scottish poems. The later works were undoubtedly forgeries, though long believed in in Germany. Goethe was making a literal translation of the Gaelic.

of October. The first toast after "The Will of all Wills," shall be drunk to you. For the Warwickshire man I have already preached together a fine public; and I am translating pieces of Ossian, so that I can bring him forward with a full mind.

My sister sends greetings. She has been obliged to tell me circumstantially what would be said at your presence here; and then for the first time I clearly understood the beginning of your letter, and laughed to myself and thought, "How must Herder have looked when he heard Domenicus Baham Feti *so* spoken of"?* But yet you have (*ut soles*) brought out the *Facit* well. *Subtrahendo* first, and then *addendo* the remainder, to my Strasbourg sum. It is also reported that I have written *excellent* works. My sister does not even know why she should not publish them at your continued request. It would not have been unpleasing to you to read the history of my mind, and to know the peculiar standpoint from which I then looked at the world. It was not allowed to you. Let it be as it is: Apostles or Philistines. I remain for you what I have been. Adieu.

GOETHE.

51.—To SALZMANN.

[Frankfort] 28 Nov. 1771.

YOU know me so well, and still I will bet that you do not guess why I do not write. It is a passion, an altogether unexpected passion; and you know how things of that sort will throw me into a whirl, so that I forget the sun, the moon, and the dear stars themselves. You know how I cannot go long without such, and that at any cost I plunge into it. This time no consequences need be feared. All my genius depends at present on a certain enterprise, whereby Homer, Shakespeare, and everything, is forgotten. I am dramatizing the history of one of the noblest of Germans,† rescuing the memory of an honest man; and the great labour which it costs me affords a genuine means of employing my time, which here I feel

* This is obscure; but see allusion to Domenico Feti, the Italian painter, in *Autobiog.*, bk. x. (trans. i. 351).

† Gottfried, or Goetz von Berlichingen.

so necessary, for it is sad to have to live in a place where all our activity must simmer within ourselves. I have not satisfied it, and still converse with myself both in the fields and on paper. It is true, that, when thrown back on itself, my soul soars to flights which collapsed in the distracted life of Strasbourg. Yet even that would form but poor company, if I did not turn all the power which I feel within me towards one object, and tried to seize and carry it on as far as I could; and what cannot get on itself, I drag along. When it is ready, you shall have it; and I trust to give you no small pleasure, by resuscitating for your sake a noble ancestor—such as, unfortunately, we only know from their gravestones. I know, besides, that you love him a little because it is I who bring him forth.

You see hence how very simple my occupation is, since I am, notwithstanding, able to attend in leisure hours to my practice.* How often I wish for you, to read you a short passage from the work, and to hear judgment and approbation from you. For the rest, everything here is dead around me. You may easily guess, however, how many changes have taken place with me during these months, for you know how much paper used to go weekly for the diary of my brain.

Frankfurt is still the Nest—the "Nidus," if you please. Well enough for hatching birds; otherwise, figuratively too, a "*spelunca*," a wretched hole. May God help us out of this misery! Amen.

I looked for your letter of 5th October, and I found a lot more to be answered. My dear man, my friends must pardon me: my forward *nisus* is so strong, that I seldom can force myself to take breath, and to look backwards; it is always a matter somewhat painful to me, too, to catch up interrupted threads of imagination.

Herr Silbermann has sent me the plan of the Minster.† Thank him many times, and assure him of the deep acknowledgment which I owe him for his wonderful kindness.

The sketches do not matter. Would you be so kind as to get back the comedy from O-Ferol, or whoever else

* Goethe had now become an advocate at Frankfort.

† See Letter 47.

may have it (in case the people do not want it any longer), and send it sealed under my address, to Herr H. Greet Lerse and Jung;* I have received their letters. They must remember me kindly. Many compliments, &c.

GOETHE.

52.—To HERDER.

[Frankfort, end of 1771.]

YOU herewith receive the result of my hermit life in this place in outline, which, while it has been dashed with pencil upon the canvas, and even to some extent been filled up in sundry places, yet withal is nothing but a sketch. I shall not render you any account, my dear fellow, concerning my work, and neither shall I tell you my present feelings about it, since I have got up and withdrawn into the distance. It would look as if I wished to guide your opinion, because I feared it would stray to a position I did not wish. But this I venture to say, that I really have worked with confidence, devoting to it the best energies of my soul, because I worked with the intention of consulting you, knowing that your judgment will not only open my eyes about this piece, but moreover, like Oeser, will teach you, with regard to the piece, to plant it as a milestone, starting from which you have to enter upon a long, long journey, and to calculate by the points of rest. Nor shall I undertake any alteration before I hear your voice, for I well know that then a radical regeneration must take place, if it is to see the light.

I am studying at present the life and death of another hero, and turn it into dialogue in my head. As yet it is but a dim foreboding. Sokrates, the philosophic hero-soul; "the conquering fury of all lies and vices, especially those that seem not such; or rather the divine call to the teacher of mankind, the ἐξουσίαν of the μετανοεῖτε, the gaping crowd, the few who have ears to hear; the Pharisaic Philisterdom of the Melites and Anytes,†" who are not the cause, only the contingents, of the gravitation and final

* Franz Lerse, like Jung, was a fellow-student. The name of the former was given to a character in *Goetz v. Berlichingen.*

† He refers to Meletus and Anytus, the accusers of Sokrates. Plato Apol. 18.

preponderance of worthlessness. I want time to develope this into feeling. And then, after all, I do not know whether I am related to Æsop and Lafontaine on the side on which, according to Hamann, they sympathize with the genius of Sokrates, or whether, from the worship of that Götz-like form, painted and gilded by Plato and incensed by Xenophon, I shall be able to soar up to the true religion in which, instead of the saint, a great man reveals himself, whom I only press to my heart with love-rapture, and exclaim, "My friend and my brother!" And to dare to say this with confidence to a great man! Were I only for one day and one night Alcibiades, then would I die!

A few days ago I embraced you with my whole heart, as if I saw you again and heard your voice. I saw the flagellated Heliodorus lying on the ground, and the heavenly indignation of all the avenging spirits roared around me. You would probably decipher these metaphors, even if I did not mention to you the 'Wandsbeck Messenger,' and 'The Biographist.' I cannot deny that there was, mixed with my joy, a trifle of angry recollection, and that certain old scars began to itch, like freshly-healed wounds at a change in the weather. I noticed it, indeed, only long afterwards, and I caressed my Genius maternally with consolation and hope.

A short time ago, too, I spent a delightful evening with Merck.* I was as happy as I could be in again meeting a man in whose society feelings are developed and thoughts defined.

And now, venerable priest, do not forget, in the service of the altar, the discipline of the acolytes, whose fancy naturally envies your sacred vestment, but whose strength, unfortunately, in their "Adjunctus-" and church-desk-vocation, outruns the *non plus ultra*. Let us end with the end of the Platonic defender of Sokrates:

καὶ ἐὰν δοκῶσί τι εἶναι μηδὲν ὄντες ὀνειδίζετε αὐτοῖς, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐκ ἐπιμελοῦνται ὧν δεῖ, καὶ οἴονταί τι εἶναι ὄντες οὐδενὸς ἄξιοι. καὶ ἐὰν ταῦτα ποιῆτε δίκαια πεπονθὼς ἐγὼ ἔσομαι ὑφ' ὑμῶν.†

* See below, Letter 76. † Plato Apol. 33.

53.—To Salzmann.

3 February, 1772.

I have received 'Berlichingen' and the enclosure: I am glad of your approval, and thank you for your trouble. I have no connexion whatever with the *Gelehrten Anzeigen*, except, indeed, that I know and esteem the Director, and that a co-proprietor is a particular friend of mine.* Take it in by all means; you will find none in Germany to excel it in sincerity, in genuine feeling and in ideas. The association is very respectable, and increases in numbers daily. So much for that.

When you have an opportunity, would you ask my violoncello master, Busch, whether he still has the sonatas for two basses, which we used to play together? Get them from him, and send them to me as soon as possible. I am practising rather more industriously than before.

It would be impossible for the quickest writer, as you know, to keep a journal of my other affairs. In the meanwhile, you have seen from my drama that the intentions of my soul are becoming more lasting, and I trust they will by-and-by have become confirmed. Day by day prospects enlarge, and obstacles vanish, so that I can confidently lay the blame on these feet of mine, if I make no progress. Let one day go to school to the other. For, once for all, the state of minority cannot be skipped over. Farewell, and think of me when things go well with you. I wish the new couple every happiness! It has given me great pleasure. To Frau ——, and Herrn ——, and Frau ——, *ut supra*.

Goethe.

54.—To Johann Heinrich Jung.†

Our correspondence seems to look somewhat faint-hearted. To all appearance, neither you nor your friends have anything to tell me. According to strict etiquette, I

* He refers to Merck and J. G. Schlosser.

† Enclosed in the preceding letter. Jung, born 1740, was the son of indigent parents, but having educated himself with unremitting industry, he took to the profession of medicine, which he was now studying at Strasbourg. He acquired a considerable reputation as an oculist. He also wrote several religious works of a mystical nature.

certainly *owe* you an answer, but I would never have thought that you would reason in that way. My situation is so changed, that the details of my life and mind could have little interest for you.

You, on the other hand, are still acting your old part on the stage which used to be common to us both. How pleasant, how useful, to me would it be to be reminded of it. Still, I can imagine how things stand with you. Pray salute your love and your friends from me, and drag on through the world as best you can.

GOETHE.

You have still my opera *Il mondo alla riversa:* give it to the Herrn Actuarius. He will forward it to me.

55.—To HERDER.

[Wetzlar,* beginning of July, 1772.]

STILL always on the billows in my little boat; and when the stars hide themselves, I float along in the hand of Fate, and courage and hope, fear and peace, alternate within my breast. Since I learned the force of the words *στῆθος* and *πραπίδες*, a new world has arisen within me. Poor Man, to whom the head is everything! I am at present dwelling in Pindar; and if the splendour of the palace could give happiness, I ought to have it. As, one after the other, he hurls his arrows towards their cloudy goal, I confess I stand there and gape: and yet meanwhile I feel what Horace knew how to express, what Quintilian praises, and all that there is of doing in me revives, for I feel nobility and know what purpose is. *Εἰδὼς φυά, ψεφηνὸς ἀνὴρ, μυρίαν ἀρετὰν ἀτελεῖ νόῳ γενέται, οὔποτ' ἀτρεκεῖ κατέβα ποδὶ, μαθόντες*, &c.† These words have pierced my soul like swords. You know now how things are looking with me, and what your letter has been to me in this Philoktetic condition.

Since I last heard from you, the Greeks have become my only study. At first I confined myself to Homer, and then, through Xenophon and Plato, I sought out Sokrates.

* Goethe went to Wetzlar in the spring of this year to study the procedure of the Imperial Chamber of Justice there located.

† Pindar, Nem. Od. iii.

Then, at last, my eyes were opened to my own worthlessness. I fell in with Theokritus and Anakreon; something, at last, drew me towards Pindar, and there I still remain. Otherwise I have done nothing at all, and in everything else I am still horribly confused, and the good spirit has at last revealed to me the cause of this wood-peckerish condition. It came across me at Pindar's words, ἐπικρατεῖν δύνασθαι. When you stand boldly in the chariot, while four fresh horses, wild beyond measure, rear against your reins, you guide their strength, you pull up the impetuous and lash down the rearing one; you gallop on, you guide, you turn, and whip, and stop, and again speed along, until all sixteen feet in simultaneous tread attain the goal—that is mastery, ἐπικρατεῖν, artistic skill! But if I have been walking about everywhere, I have only peeped in everywhere:* I have nowhere grasped anything. To grasp, to seize, is the essence of all mastery. You have vindicated this in the case of sculpture, and I find that every artist is nothing as long as his hands do not work plastically. "Everything is so much a look with you," you used often to say to me. Now I understand it; shut the eyes, and work in the dark. It must either succeed or break down. Look, what sort of a musician is he who keeps looking at his instrument? Χείρες ἅαπτοι, ἧτορ ἄλκιμον, that is all; and yet that all must be one, and not μυρίαν ἀρετὰν ἀτελεῖ νόῳ γεύειν. I would fain pray, like Moses in the Koran: "Make me room. O Lord, in my narrow breast!"

No day passes without my communing with you, and I often think, "If one could but live with him!" It will come, it will come! The youth in his coat of mail wanted to follow too soon, and you ride too fast. Enough, I shall not be idle in following my path and performing my own task. Should we meet again, then there are wider paths.

For the last fortnight I have been reading your "fragments" for the first time; I need not tell you what they are to me. That I grasped you best when you speak of the Greeks, delighted me; yet nothing has descended upon me more like a divine revelation, nothing has animated my heart and soul through and through with warmer, holier

* I can write, but not cut pens, so I cannot get a good hand; I can play the violoncello, but not tune it, etc.

presence, than that, how *thought* and *feeling* form the *expression*. How thoroughly I enjoyed this!

Pray let us try whether we cannot meet more frequently. You may feel how you would embrace him who could be to you what you are to me. Let us not, like weaklings, be deterred from this by the apprehension that we must of necessity often clash with one another; and, should our passions come into a collision, can we not endure a blow? It is more my matter than yours. Enough: if you have aught against me, say so outright, seriously, angrily, snarlingly, just as it happens. Thus will I too tell you that I last felt indignant about your answer on the 'Felsweihe,' and that I taxed you with being an intolerant parson. The "Goetz-priests" * and "with a profane hand forcing out the name," were not right. If I were wrong in striking up a dirge before your maiden, why should you therefore charge with fire and sword into the midst of it? I know, indeed, that this is your style: you will not let it alone. Be it so. Only, in the case of extreme Walter Shandyish distress, do not make such long pauses. As concerns the point, no interference shall in future be made with your right to make the hours melancholy for your maiden, and thus would I have this too off my mind.

I tell you nothing about our communion of saints. I am νεόφυτος, and, as a matter of fact, have up to this time only gone with others; with Merck I am firmly allied, but it is more from a common need than a common aim.

Just one word about 'Berlichingen.' Your letter was a letter of comfort; I rated it far lower even than you. The proposition "that Shakespeare has quite spoilt you," I recognized at once in its full force. Enough about it; it must be smelted, purified from all slang, mixed with new and nobler materials and recast; then it shall appear before you again. It is all only a piece of thinking; that vexes me enough. 'Emilia Galotti' is also only thought-out, and neither accident nor caprice ever play the least part in it. With half a brain, one can find out the wherefore of every scene—of every word, I might say. Therefore I am not partial to that piece, masterpiece as it otherwise is; and just as little to my own.

If it were not that in the depths of my soul there was still

* See below, p. 139, note.

so much that foretold—often only flitting within it—that I might hope, "if beauty and greatness interweave themselves more in thy feeling, thou wilt do what is good and beautiful, speaking and writing without knowing why thou doest it."

Farewell. I have just received No. 54 of the *Frankfort Journal.*

56.—To Kestner.*

[Wetzlar, 8 August, 1772.]

To-morrow, about 5, I expect you; and to-day—you could guess it, so well must you know me already—to-day I have been at Atspach. And to-morrow we go there together; then I hope to find friendlier faces. In the meantime I have been there, and I have to tell you that Lotte enjoyed herself intensely this evening in the moonlit valley, and wished to bid you good-night. I wanted to say this to you myself, and have been at your house; but there was no light in your room, so I would not make a noise. Early to-morrow we drink coffee under the tree in Garbenheim, where I supped in the moonlight to-night. Alone—yet not alone. Sleep well. May it be fine to-morrow.

57.—To Kestner.

[6 September, 1772.]

Yesterday I grumbled the whole afternoon because Lotte had not gone to Atspach, and early to-day I continued doing so. The morning is so splendid, and my soul so peaceful, that I cannot remain in the town: I shall go to Garbenheim. Lotte said yesterday, she should walk rather farther to-day than usual—not that I expect you out there,

* Johann Christian Kestner, who was at this time twenty-six years old, was secretary of legation to the Hanoverian embassy at Wetzlar, whither Goethe had now gone to gain experience in the Imperial Chamber of Justice, of which Wetzlar was the seat, and at which a "Visitation" was now being held. Kestner was betrothed informally to Charlotte Buff, to whom Goethe also became attached. The main details of this story are familiar through the romance of *Werther*, the tragic sequel of which is, however, founded upon another episode altogether disconnected with Goethe's own history, as will be seen from later letters. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii.

—but wish? With my whole heart, and I hope—somewhat less, indeed, but just so much that it balances midway the uncertainty of the wish. In the uncertainty, then, I will spend my day, and hope and hope; and if I must return alone in the evening—you know what is becoming in a wise man, and how wise I am.

58.—To Kestner.*

[10 September, 1772.]

He is gone, Kestner; when you get this letter, he is gone. Give Lottchen the enclosed note. I was very composed, but your conversation has torn me to pieces. At present I can say nothing to you but farewell. Had I remained with you a moment longer, I could not have restrained myself. Now I am alone, and to-morrow I go. Oh, my poor head!

59.†—To Charlotte Buff.‡

I hope, indeed, to come back again, but God knows when. Lotte, what did my heart feel whilst you were talking, for I knew that it was the last time that I should see you. Not the last time, and yet to-morrow I go away. He is gone. What spirit led you to that conversation? When I was forced to say all I felt, ah, my thoughts were of this life, of your hand, which I kissed for the last time; the room which I shall not enter again, and the dear father who accompanied me for the last time. I am now alone, and may weep. I leave you happy, and shall remain in your hearts. I shall see you again, but not to-morrow is never. Tell my boys he is gone. I can say no more.

* This and the following two letters were written immediately before Goethe left Wetzlar, a step which his attachment to Charlotte Buff impelled him to take somewhat suddenly.

† Enclosed in the preceding letter.

‡ The eldest daughter of Herr Buff, a bailiff (Amtmann) of the ancient military corporation of *Deutsche Ritter* or Teutonic knights. He had charge of an official residence which was inhabited by Hofrath Brandt and his family, called the *Deutsche* or *Teutsche Haus*.

60.*—To Charlotte Buff.

[11 September, † 1772.]

Everything is packed up, Lotte, and day breaks; one more quarter of an hour, and I am off. The pictures which I have forgotten, and which you will divide among the children, must be my excuse, Lotte, for writing when I have nothing to write. For you know all: you know how happy I have been during these days. And I go to the dearest, best of men,‡ but wherefore from you? But it is so, and my fate, which I cannot alter to-day nor to-morrow, nor the next day—what I have often declared in jest. Be ever happy in mind, dear Lotte—you are luckier than a hundred others—only not indifferent; and I, dear Lotte, am happy, because I read in your eyes that you think I shall never change. Adieu, a thousand times adieu!

Goethe.

61.—To Kestner.

[Frankfort.]

God bless you for all your goodness, and a thousand-fold joy to you for the remembrance of me. Greet the dear girls for me.

I met Schweizer yesterday, and joked him about his Wetzlar life. "Where were you most intimate then?" "At the *Teutsche Haus*," said I. "But not at Brand's?" said he. "Yes, indeed, at Brand's," said I; "why not?" "Then you know the bailiff's too?"—"Yes, indeed." "Lotte is a very pleasant girl."—"Tolerably so," said I, &c. &c.

This was consoling and pleasing to me. If I only can speak of her, if even it is the contrary of what I think.

At Coblenz I have no acquaintance, and on this side of the valley you know how it is.

I pity your honest fellow. Make inquiries by all means; if it has not gone altogether too far, save the poor boy. A girl has nothing so difficult in this way with a child, as an honourable fellow with a woman. Adieu.

* Enclosed with the preceding.

† From a passage in Kestner's diary, we learn that Goethe left Wetzlar at seven o'clock on this day. From this point the romance of *Werther* ceases to coincide with his own experiences. (See *Goethe und Werther, von A. Kestner*, pp. 13–16.)

‡ Viz., Merck. See p. 108.

62.—To Kestner.

God bless you, dear Kestner. Tell Lotte that I sometimes imagine I could forget her, but then a relapse overwhelms me, and it is worse with me than ever.

63.—To Johann Gottfried Röderer,* Strasbourg.

[Frankfort], 21 September, 177[2].

Herr Hafner will tell you how I am, and I hardly need assure you how pleasant it is to me to see written evidence that your love, your confidence in me, has rather been increased than diminished by distance, since it is well known to you how much I *must* sympathize wherever I feel spirit and activity.

It was not our lot to become more intimately acquainted, and mutually to assist one another by intercourse; and yet we may perhaps be more closely allied than many youthful friends. It is not a question here of any claims of time; a single glance causes us to acknowledge a mutual interest, and a single stroke in the dark is often worth more than a walk in the broad sunshine.

I am glad that my talk amongst you has been anointed with "ἐξουσία," and that the spirit of all that lives has converted my words into a fertilizing rain, to renovate the life and elasticity of languishing plants.

The opportunity which you find of applying yourself practically to architecture is excellent. If the artist is not at the same time a workman, he is nothing; but the misfortune is that most of our artists are only workmen. So long as it is only a question of everyday structures it is all very well; but as soon as a palace or monument has to be raised, then their magic-wand is too weak, and for that the architect specially is wanted. Every peasant gives the carpenter the idea for the erection of his mud

* This correspondent is not mentioned in the Autobiography. He was possibly a son of Joh. Georg Röderer, a celebrated physician of Strasbourg who died in 1763.

hovel. Who is to build up to the clouds Jupiter's dwelling? Who but a Vulcan, a god like himself?

Indeed the artist must have a soul as great as that of the king for whom he vaults his halls; a man like Erwin, like Bramante.* That greatest masterpiece of German architecture, which you have daily before your eyes, which in inspired hours you may think of with the Muse, will tell you more emphatically than I, that the great mind differs from the little one chiefly in this, that its work is independent; that, irrespective of what others have done, it seems to have coexisted with its designation from all eternity till now, whilst the little head, by its ill-applied imitation, at once manifests its poverty and its narrowness.

Viewed from this point, how often do the largest buildings dwindle down into small ones, like the citizens' houses seen from the Minster.

Farewell. On the Minster think of me too; and if you see my name on one of the corner-pillars, then imagine from yourself what I was in those old times when we did not yet know one another; and may you feel all the bliss which I myself felt. In those times I wished for many men and for myself to be as I know you now. Farewell,

GOETHE.

If as a theologian you can bring yourself to do it, dc not deny me your voice when I apply to the Club through Hrn. Jung for a day of celebration for the noble Shakespeare.

64.—To KESTNER.

[Frankfort,] Friday, [25 September, 1772.]

LOTTE has not dreamt of me. I take that very much amiss, and it is my will that she shall dream of me this night, and shall not tell you anything about it. The passage vexed me in your letter, when I read it over again. Not dreamt of me once! an honour we confer on the most indifferent things which surround us during the day. And—have I not been with her, body and soul, and dreamt of her day and night?

* Erwin à Steinbach, the architect of Strasbourg Cathedral. Lazzaro Bramante d'Urbino was the first designer of S. Peter's at Rome.

By God! I am a fool when I am most wise, and my Genius is an evil Genius, when it posted me to Wolpertshausen:* and yet it is a good Genius. I could not have spent my days better in W[etzlar], and yet the gods give me no more such days; they understand punishing and Tantalus. Good night. I have just said that to Lotte's likeness.

Saturday Evening, after supper.

This was formerly the time at which I went to you, the hour at which I met you, and now I have plenty of time to write. Would that you could see how diligent I am. To leave everything so suddenly, everything in which my four months' happiness lay.

I do not fear that you will forget me, and yet I think about our meeting again. Here everything may go as it can, and I will not see Lotte again until I am able to confide to her that I am in love, right seriously in love.

What are my dear boys doing? what is Ernst doing? It were better that I should not write to you, and leave my imagination in peace; but there hangs the silhouette, that is worse than all. Farewell.

65.—To Kestner.

[3 October, 1772.]

I have already said, if the stuff pleases Lotte as well as it becomes her, our taste will be commended. I shall not send it yet, for I have to object to the decision in favour of the blue, that it is too hard and quite unbecoming. Either the green herewith enclosed, or straw-colour—and I should like the last best, because I have already prophesied that one day Lotte will like yellow as much as she now likes red; and it would be so pleasant to me to have introduced it. Write me the decision. Only, no blue. If she can think of me also amidst tender farewell tears, tell her I am with her a hundred times. Dorothy Brandt† has been much talked of. Even Merck's ‡ wife has already heard

* Goethe made Lotte's acquaintance at a ball at Wolpertshausen. (*Goethe und Werther, von A. Kestner.*)

† The Brandts or Brands also inhabited the *Teutsche Haus;* see Letter 61.

‡ See Letter 76.

about it. You must soon come to Friedberg, or I shall come to Wetzlar. Greet the black-eyed one for me. For the rest, Wetzlar is quite dead to me. Many greetings to my dear boys. Much happiness to Hans, and speedy recovery to Ernst. Remember me to the Bailiff.

GOETHE.

66.—To KESTNER.

[Frankfort], Tuesday, [6 October, 1772].

TO-MORROW, early, the calico goes off, and the *Literary Journal*,* and pictures for the boys, that everyone may have something. Our rows with the parsons daily increase. They expose themselves more and more, and we give them back as good as they send. Would that I were sitting again at Lotte's feet, and had the boys scrambling around me. How goes it in the *Teutsche Haus?* Is there peace and unity still amongst all? Is Dorothy as much alive as ever? If I were in Wetzlar, I should have something to confide to Lotte, of which you must know nothing. Adieu, dear Kestner. Greet Dorothy for me—and good Kielmannsegge† too. Is it true that you are going to remain a hundred years longer in Wetzlar? They say in public that the Visitation had soon another meeting and finished with the [cases] *suspensis:* whereupon the second class marched in; and Hanover is still there! It is not the Empire which troubles me. Give Born the four florins for the newspapers. He is to keep them until further orders.

GOETHE.

67.—To CHARLOTTE BUFF.

[8 October, 1772.]

THANKS to your good spirit, golden Lotte, which impelled you to give me an unexpected joy, and though he were as black as fate, thank him. To-day, before I went to dinner, I kissed your picture warmly; and at table—I wondered at the unusual letter, broke it open and put it aside. O, dear Lotte, since I saw you for the first time,

* The *Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen*, edited by Merck and contributed to by Goethe.

† Count von Kielmannsegge. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii. (trans. i. 462).

how everything is changed: there is still the blood-red colour on the ribbon, but it seems to me paler than it was in the carriage, which is natural. Thanks to your heart that you can still make me such a present, but I will in the darkest depths of my grief—— No, Lotte, you remain to me: therefore may the All-wealthy in heaven give you of his fairest fruits; and to whom He denies them on earth, to him may He, above in Paradise, where cool brooks flow between palm-trees, and fruits hang above like gold—— But I wish I could be with you for an hour.

Something more before I go to bed; our two lovers * are on the pinnacle of happiness. The father is satisfied, under very favourable conditions, and it depends now on secondary considerations. The same to you, dear Lotte! Good night.

68.—To Kestner.

Saturday, [10 October, 1772.]

Write to me immediately whether the news about Goué is confirmed.† I honour such a deed, and pity mankind, and leave—all Philistine fellows to make their tobacco-pipe reflexions over it, and say, *I told you so.* I hope never to afflict my friends with such news.

Our calico (since that, too, belongs to the great wheel of things) has not yet arrived. That surprises me. It went from here yesterday week, or Tuesday week. It is a roll of calico, pictures, and newspapers. My servant has just been to the post, to ask whether it can have been left behind here.

There was yet another mischance. In the aforesaid roll there are only two ells; the third you will receive through Born.

How many hundred times do I think and dream of past scenes. Lotte,—my boys. We are now only twelve leagues apart.

* Goethe's sister and J. G. Schlosser.—K.

† A false report had been spread that Goué had shot himself.—K. Von Goué, an attaché of the Hanoverian legation, mentioned as an 'epicurean philosopher,' and a 'great genius,' by Kestner (K. p. 36) is referred to in *Autobiog.*, bk. xii. (trans. i. 462).

They assure me here, at the post-house, that the roll went off to Wetzlar yesterday (Friday) week. Be so good as to make inquiries about it. It will arrive at Krachbein.

69.—To Kestner.

[Frankfort, 21 October.]

Here are a few sheets worth their weight in gold. Greet Kielmannsegge for me; they will please him. Young Falck was with me yesterday; a lively young fellow, such as I like. To-day I am going for a walk with him, and to introduce him to Schlosser.

And Lotte—when I come to the Friedberg Gate, I feel as if I must come to you. It lies heavy on my heart that I went away cross with Sophie: I hope she has forgotten and forgiven it; if not, I beg her to do so. Write and tell me how I stand with her. And how is Emily? I beg you to give closer and more distinct information about Gotter. Your remark about him is too mysterious. These few splendid days we have celebrated Autumn, and I have thought more of Lotte than she has of me in a quarter of a year. Yet I hope in time to be free of this trouble.

70.—To Kestner.

[27 October, 1772.]

Here is another newspaper. Thank you for all your good tidings. And Lotte or you, whichever goes first to Atspach, will wish the dear people happiness in my name. If you could know how often I am with you, and how still—— Sometimes doubt rises up in me, and I remember Lotte *en panier*, as they all are—but soon she appears to me again in her blue-striped dressing-jacket, and her innocent goodness, which she alone has; and then I hope not to be lost in her mind, amongst the great insignificant multitude. I have not seen Falck again. The whirl of society has swallowed him up. Greet Kielmannsegge warmly for me. I should like to visit him on his sick-bed. The third judge is one of those wretched beings who are condemned to drag out their lives in the

darkness of their own conceit. Adieu. Your commission shall be attended to. Gotter is a changeable man. Pshaw, for the passage in his letter. It is a crooked, paltry equivocation. His good heart—good hearts, indeed! I know the scamp.

71.—To Kestner.

Unhappy Jerusalem!* The news was shocking and unexpected to me; it was horrible to have this news as an accompaniment to the pleasantest gift of love. The unfortunate man! But the devils, who are the infamous men who enjoy nothing but the chaff of vanity, and have the lust of vanity in their hearts, and preach idolatry, and cramp healthy nature, and overstrain and ruin the faculties, are guilty of this misery—of our misery. May the devil, their brother, take them! If the cursed parson —— is not guilty, God forgive me; but I wish that he may break his neck, like Eli. Poor lad! When I returned from a walk, and he met me yonder in the moonlight, I said, "He is in love." Lotte must still remember that I laughed about it. God knows loneliness has undermined his heart, and—— For seven years† his form has been familiar to me; I have talked little with him. At my departure I took with me a book of his; I will keep that and the memory of him as long as I live.

Thank all your children; it is healing, precious comfort when I see your keepsake and your joy. It was well it all came so together, life and death, sorrow and joy. How different, how different from the report that Goué had shot himself. Farewell. Greet Lotte a thousand times. How happy you are.‡

* Goethe had now heard that it was he, and not Von Goué, who had shot himself. Jerusalem was the son of the Protestant Abbot of Riddagshausen, and an attaché of the Brunswick Legation. He was a man of some capacity, and enjoyed the friendship of Lessing, who was then Librarian to the Duke of Brunswick at Wolfenbüttel.

† Jerusalem was at Leipsic with Goethe in 1765–7.

‡ Before the date of the next letter, Goethe paid a visit with Schlosser to Wetzlar, where he stayed from November 5th to the 10th. *Vide* Kestner's diary, quoted K., p. 67.

72.—To Kestner.

[Friedberg, 10 November, 1772.]

I am a nice fellow. Being sent out on a local commission, I live in fancy over the past and in the future. Yesterday evening I was still with you; and now I sit in disagreeable Friedberg, awaiting a stonemason, with whom I wish to come to terms about the repair of my cursed castle. You can think how short the way hither was to me, and how I drove up to-day from the Crown-Prince, and saw the walls of the *Teutsche Haus*, and the road along which I had been so many hundred times, and then turned to the right into the Schmidtgasse. I wished I had taken formal leave yesterday evening; but it was too much, and I lost one kiss, which you would not have been able to refuse. I nearly went away from here early this morning. S. detained me, therefore I shall shortly play him a trick, for I will not be the only one to suffer. Certainly, Kestner, it was time for me to go. Yesterday evening I had quite vile thoughts on the sofa, for which I deserve to be hanged.

The stonemason has been, and I am no further than before; and a packet has come from my father, for which I have sent, which may contain edifying matter. In the meantime I have been with you again, and my soul is still with you and with my little ones. Would that men were born to enjoy pure delight.

My father's letter is here. Good God! when I am old, shall I be like this also? Shall my soul no longer care for that which is loveable and good? Strange that one should think the older a man becomes, the freer he will be from what is worldly and small. He becomes more and more worldly and more petty. You see I am finely in train to rave, but God knows it is only for the sake of occupying myself with you, of forgetting who, where, and what I am.

Schlosser has just returned from an embassy. Love suggests to him the protocol; he inquisitioned into the deepest corner of hell: however, everything remains as it is, and we effect so much with running and hurrying, that we will not yield the precedence to an important Visitation-deputation.

And when I think again how I return from Wetzlar, having been received with a love so far above my hopes, I am quite at rest. I confess to you I was somewhat anxious about it, for misfortune has so often befallen me already. I came with a very full, warm heart, dear Kestner; and it is a hell-pain when one is not received as one comes. But then—God give you a whole life such as those two days were to me.

Supper is coming. Good night. Once more, good night. Remember me to the old father and to my boys. Remind Lotte of me at the concert, and Dorothy too. One thing more. Lotte has an article which is too big for her. I have begged her to allow me to exchange it for a smaller one; send it me well packed up by the post.*

73.—To Kestner.

[Frankfort, 13 November, 1772.]

Here is 'German Architecture'† for Kielmannsegge and you.

Did you think of me at the concert? and how are you?

Have you received the edifying letter from Friedberg yet? I wrote it to occupy my mind, which would otherwise have been quite unruly. From thence I went to Homburg; and have won back again the love of life, since the appearance of such a wretched being as myself can give satisfaction to such excellent people.

Adieu! I am resting here. On Monday I go to Darmstadt, on Wednesday to Mannheim, where I am looking forward to the pleasure of chatting about Lotte with Fräulein Baschle.

74.—To Kestner.

[14 November, 1772.]

To-day I have received your kind letter, full of

* He means a comb, of which mention is made in Letters 81 and 84.

† A small treatise which Goethe had written entitled 'On German Architecture, i.m. Ervini a Steinbach.' See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii., where however it is mentioned before the Wetzlar visit.

remembrances, and must at least tell you in return how much it delights me and how much I love you.

Lotte knows well that she can say what she likes. I, poor devil, am ever at the greatest disadvantage. She is Lotte notwithstanding, and everything remains as it was.

Here is a copy of the 'Architecture' for Falk. How goes it with my head?* Do hurry it on. Would you kindly tell Wandrer, I have inquired after Zwiefel: for the amateurs have assured me that it is too late: one must look after them in September; the good ones have all been selected. Notwithstanding, I have sent to the Italian; who sends me word however there are no more to be had, for by this time they are busy

75.—To Frau von Laroche.†

[15 November, 1772.‡]

Why even one word about your letter not following immediately on mine? Do I not know your heart, and do I not know that it continues unchangeable in affection and friendship?

Since the first priceless moments which brought me to you, since those scenes of deepest emotion, how often has my soul been with you, and thence into the glory of homely motherly bliss, adored by such angels, seeing you, and what is more, living with you! My poverty of words, my incapacity to rejoice aloud, have only enabled me to express to myself what I felt, and you—you know best what your heart says for me.

* This paragraph refers to some silhouettes.—K.

† Sophie von Laroche, the wife of a privy-councillor of the Electorate of Treves: and the author of several romances. One of these, 'The History of the Fräul. von Sternheim,' was reviewed by Goethe in the *Frankf. Gelehrt. Anzeigen* in 1772. Goethe made her acquaintance, through Merck, in this year, and was a guest in her house at Ehrenbreitstein on his way from Wetzlar, as related in the *Autobiography*, bk. xiii. Frau von Laroche was at this time forty-one years of age, and had two daughters, Maximiliane and Louise. This and other letters to the same correspondent are from *Schlosser's Nachlass*, ed. Frese.

‡ The date, added by Schlosser, is 5th Nov., but it must have been later than the 10th, when he ended his visit to Wetzlar, referred to in the letter, as we know from Kestner's diary. See note, p. 103 *above*.

You complain of loneliness. Alas that it is the fate of the noblest soul to sigh vainly for a reflexion of itself! You will not be so always, and even now with what perfect feeling do you see your two daughters growing under your eyes, who if they are not everything to you, are yet all that the good Godhead can give to mortals of bliss. But that also is the fate of man, that the rich man does not vividly feel his wealth. Believe your friends, how over-well the Dispenser of all things has dealt with you; we only know what you have, for we do not feel what is lacking to you!—A hundred times we rejoice again in spirit over the moments which we enjoyed in the presence of the most beautiful nature, in the most blissful circle. Mad. Merck felt the full warmth of your letter and greets you heartily through me; she also longingly awaits a letter from Madlle. Max.

Merck tells us that you wish to know some of the circumstances of Jerusalem's death. We wandered about near each other for 4 months in Wetzlar, and even a week after his death I was there: Baron Kielmannsegge,* one of the few with whom he made himself intimate, said to me: "That which but few will believe, which I may tell you; the anxious striving after truth and moral goodness has so undermined his heart, that unsuccessful trials of life and passion have urged him to the tragic resolution."

A noble heart and a penetrating head, how easily do they pass from extraordinary feelings to such resolutions, and life—of what use is that which I can tell you of it; to me it is satisfaction enough to have raised a monument in your heart to the departed unfortunate, whose deed will be so unfeelingly torn to pieces by the world.

I hope Madlle. Max will allow me sometimes to write; I will not abuse her goodness.

Farewell, and if you could feel how much interest I take in all that comes from you, you would many a time feel called to write me a letter, and Madlle. Max would linger longer over her precious postscripts.

GOETHE.

* See note, p. 100. He is called a "Stoic philosopher" by Kestner (K. p. 36).

76.—To Kestner.

[Darmstadt, 20 November, 1772.]

I am in Darmstadt: I shall not go to Mannheim. Just as we wanted to start, a hindrance detained Merck:* whoever holds an office must unfortunately wait on it. It gives us so much pleasure, and does us so much good to be once more together, that I don't like to go on alone. Address your letter to me direct here, and send me the information about Jerusalem's death. Doubtless you have already written to me at Frankfort, but it will be so long before I receive that. Early to-day I was talking a great deal with the Flachsland,† of Lotte and you, and my dear boys. Merck and his wife and Henry greet you. I greet you all; my soul is often with you. Adieu.

Goethe.

77.—To Kestner.

[Darmstadt, 29 November, 1772.]

Thank you, dear Kestner, for the account of poor Jerusalem's death; it interested us deeply. You shall have it back when it is copied.

Merck and his wife greet you: the latter is always declaring that you must be a very good man. Henry goes to the theatre every evening and does not trouble himself about the world. Your greeting to the Flachsland has gained me a kiss; pray send greeting oftener, and I will gladly be porter. I am to tell you that she wishes you a thousandfold happiness in your love, and everybody would like to know Lotte. I take care to talk a great deal about her, for then people smile and suspect she

* Johann Heinrich Merck was born in Darmstadt in 1741 and was thus eight years older than Goethe. He was the son of an apothecary, but had raised himself by his abilities to a high social position and was now Kriegsrath (war-councillor) to the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt. "Henry" mentioned below was his son.

† Caroline Flachsland was Herder's betrothed. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii. (trans. i. 440).

might be my sweetheart, until Merck assures them aside that I am quite innocent. Greet Dorothy and Caroline and all my boys for me. Yesterday it occurred to me to write to Lotte. But I thought her only answer would be, We will not have any more of that, and I should not like to shoot myself for the present. I have just written to Gotter, and sent him an 'Architecture.'

GOETHE.

78.—To HERDER.

[Darmstadt, 5 December, 1772.]

OUGHT not I also to append to the Messenger of Love just a little note from myself? No, Herder, we are not indeed so poor as that; God knows how we love you, and you would have a ream of paper of the conversations with you this time. I thank you for your letter and for the blessing transferred from Ossian. We are the ancients, here and there a little modified; but that is not to the purpose. And if you come in spring, it will be glorious indeed. My father sends you greeting; you are to enter beneath his roof with hospitality of course; I have now relieved my conscience in respect of him. My sister Caroline* is an angel, and how she loves you! I am going to fetch you to her, about which we have already dreamt many heavenly dreams. In the meantime farewell, and may goodness and love be poured forth from your heart towards us. Even the Paul-like gift with which at times thou smitest us, O Dean,† is to us more precious than myrrh, and does us good as the strigil and the hair-cloth does him who leaves the bath. I am now quite a draughtsman; I have courage and good fortune; I was heartily glad at the sympathy which you showed about Erwin. Merck writes verses and prints.‡ We

* He refers to Mlle. Flachsland.

† Herder was nicknamed amongst his friends "The Dean" in allusion to his admiration for Dean Swift. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii. (trans. i. 448).

‡ Merck had a printing-press at Laugen, near Darmstadt. He afterwards printed the first edition of *Goetz von Berlichingen*. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xiii. (trans. i. 498).

reflect ourselves in one another, support one another, and share weal and woe together on this life's path. And you, do not delay to come.

GOETHE.

79.—To KESTNER.

[Darmstadt] 6 [December, 1772.]

I AM still in Darmstadt, and—just as I always am. God bless you, and all love and good-will on earth. My stay here has infused a great deal of good throughout my limbs, but on the whole I am not better. *Fiat voluntas.* That you are happy, and not suicidal, as no one can be who goes up the three stone steps to the house of the lord—Bailiff Buff—I have seen in your letters, and please God be so *in saecula saeculorum.* Lotte's rejection of my considerate non-letter-writing disposition has vexed me somewhat, that is to say, very much, but not for long, as in all her naughty ways of treating people, for which Dorothy Brandt, whom God soon provide with a worthy husband, has often laughed at me. When there are peas and veal cutlets, etc. All here wish you much good, and are well and good after the manner of people, neither more nor less than after the manner of right good people.

Adieu. Cease not, as long as you love me, to bring me often to your minds; it is a matter of a bit of paper and pen-scratching which anyhow you must often flourish for the sake of the pitiful needs of the Empire.

From now, dear friend, [send] your letters to Frankfort.

80.—To KESTNER.

[Frankfort, 12 December, 1772.]

THAT is capital; I just wanted to ask you if Lenchen* were there, and you write to me that she is. If I were only over there, I would annihilate your argument, and make Schneider's life a burden to him. I think I would rather have her than Lotte. According to the portrait she is an amiable girl, much better than Lotte, if

* *I.e.* Helene, a younger sister of Charlotte's.

not just exactly the—— And I am free, and thirsting for love. I must see about coming, but that would be no good.

I am again in Frankfort, going about with new plans and fancies, all of which I should not be doing if I had a sweetheart.

Adieu; write to me soon. Here you have three 'Architectures.' Give the others to good people, Schneider for example, and greet him.

81.—To Kestner.

[15 December, 1772.]

Yesterday evening, dear Kestner, I entertained myself for an hour with Lotte and you in the twilight; then it became dark, I was trying to grope my way to the door, and went a step too far to the right, fumbled against the paper—it was Lotte's likeness, it was a pleasant sensation. I wished her a very good-night and went.

It just occurs to me that she is to send me that thing. Now, dear Kestner, take care for me that she gives it to you, and pack it well for me in a box, and let her cut a little paper of the size it is to be; give her no rest, I shall not write a syllable until I have the comb. For we are poor creatures of the senses; I would gladly have something of hers, something from her in my hands again, an outward and visible sign, whereby the inward and spiritual grace, &c., as it runs in the catechism.

Your letter makes me glad, dear Kestner; send me a large silhouette of Lenchen, I love her very much. Don't spoil the girl for me. Since I am here again from Darmstadt I am in a tolerable humour, and working bravely. Adventurous as ever, let come of it what may.

N.B. At the end of this year we cease one and all to write in the journal,* then there will be a right brave bit of work. Make that known so far as your friends take an interest in us.

That Lotte likes any one better than me except yourself, tell her would be all the same to me; the second or the

* The *Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen*. See end of Letter 83, and 84.

twentieth is all one. The first always has ninety-nine parts of the whole, and then whether one has the hundredth part alone, or shares with twenty, is much the same thing, and that I love her so much has always been a disinterested matter.

Greet Caroline warmly for me.

I have not seen Klinker, but have heard a great deal more good of it than the Frankfort reviewer says of it. Your letters are not going to be burnt. I have already thought of it. But you are not going to have them back either. When I die I will bequeath them to you.

When Lotte is in a very good humour, greet her for me, who love you heartily.

GOETHE.

The copy of the 'Lettre sur l'Homme' cost thirty kreuzers.

82.—To KESTNER.

[December, 1772.]

DEAR KESTNER,

Your letter reached me just as I had sealed up a roll which you will receive by to-morrow morning's post. It is tammy for my two little boys for jackets and trousers, otherwise called matelot. Let it be given to them on Christmas Eve, as is befitting. Place a little wax candle on it for them, and kiss them for me, and Lotte the angel. Adieu, dear Kestner, your letter has given me heavenly joy. I have also had one to-day from Versailles, from brother Lerse.* Greet them all for me, and love me. Adieu.

83.—To KESTNER.

[Frankfort, 25 December, 1772.]

CHRISTMAS-DAY early. It is still night, dear Kestner. I have risen in order to write again by the morning light, which recalls to me pleasant remembrances of past days. I have had some coffee made to honour the festival, and will

* Franz Lerse, his fellow-student at Strasbourg.

write to you until it is day. The watchman has already sounded his tune; I woke up at it. Praised be thou, Jesu Christ. I very much like this time of year, the songs one sings; and the cold which has set in makes me quite happy. Yesterday I had a magnificent day. I was afraid for to-day, but it has begun well and so I am not anxious about its end. Even yesterday night I promised my two dear likenesses to write to you; they hover over my bed like angels of God. I had pinned up Lotte's silhouette immediately on my arrival: whilst I was in Darmstadt they put my bed in here, and behold Lotte's picture hung at its head, which rejoiced me greatly. Lenchen is now on the other side; thank you, Kestner, for the dear picture, it accords far more with what you write to me of her than anything I had imagined; thus it is always with those who guess, imagine and foretell.

The watchman has turned himself to me again, the north wind brings his melody to me as if he were blowing before my window.

Yesterday, dear Kestner, I was in the country with a few good fellows; our merriment was very noisy, and shouts and laughter from beginning to end. But that has nothing to do with the coming hour, for what cannot the blessed gods effect when it pleases them; they gave me a joyful evening. I had drunk no wine, my eye was quite unprejudiced beyond Nature. A beautiful evening had become night when we returned. Now I must tell you there is even a sympathy in my soul when the sun has long gone down, and night spreads from the east towards the north and south, and only a faint circle still shines out from the west. See, Kestner, where the country is so flat there is the most splendid view; I have looked long at him thus in younger and warmer times, setting on my wanderings. On the bridge I stood still. The dark town on either side, the still shining horizon, the reflexion in the stream, made a delicious impression on my soul, which I clasped with both my arms. I ran to the Gerocks,* made them give me a pencil and paper, and drew, to my great joy, the whole picture glowing warm as it stood in my soul. They all had pleasure in it with me, felt all that I

* See *below*, Letter 86.

had done, and then only was I certain of it. I begged them to cast lots for it; they refused, and want me to send it to Merck. Now it hangs on my wall, and makes me glad to-day as yesterday. We had a beautiful evening together, like people on whom fortune has bestowed a great gift, and I fell asleep thanking the saints in heaven that they are willing to bestow on us childlike joy as a Christmas gift. As I went across the market-place and saw the many lights and playthings, I thought of you and my boys, how you would go to them, for the moment a heavenly messenger with the blue testament, and how when opened out the book will edify them. Could I have been with you I would have liked to light up such a festival of wax-candles, it might have shone as a reflexion of the splendour of heaven in the little heads. The gate-keepers are coming from the burgomaster, and rattle the keys. The first gray of day comes to me over the neighbour's house, and the bells call together a Christian congregation. I am much edified up here in my room, which for a long time I have not liked as much as I do now. It is adorned with the happiest pictures, which wish me a friendly good-morning. Seven heads after Raphael, inspired by the living spirit, one of which I have copied, and with which I am satisfied, although not over-pleased. But my dear girls. Lotte is also there, and Lenchen too. Tell Lenchen I wished so ardently to come and kiss her hands, like the monsieur who writes such loving letters. He is, indeed, a poor gentleman! I would line and stuff a coverlet for my daughter with such billets doux, and she ought to sleep under it as peacefully as a babe. My sister laughed heartily; she too has had the like from her youth up. To a girl of good feeling such things must be as repugnant as a rotten egg. The comb is exchanged, not so beautiful in colour and shape as the first, but I hope more useful. Lotte has a little head, but it is a head.

The day is coming on in strength; if happiness were as quick in advancing, we should soon celebrate a wedding. I must write one more page; I will act so far as if I did not see the daylight.

Greet Kielmannsegge for me. He must keep me in kindly thought.

The . . . fellow in Giessen who has troubled himself about us as much as the goodwife in the gospel about the lost sixpence, and who lights candles and sweeps after us everywhere, whose name must soil no letter in which Lotte's name and yours stand. The fellow is angry that we do not look at him, and tries to spite us because we remember him. He has written and asked about my Architecture in such a hurry that one sees it is food ready made for his teeth; he also spluttered a review straight off in the *Frankfort Journal* about which I have been told. Like a true ass he eats the thistles which grow round my garden, gnaws at the hedge which protects it from such beasts, and brays his critical "Hee-haw" as if he wished to signify to the master in his arbour, Here am I, too.

Now adieu, it is broad daylight; God be with you as I am with you. The day has begun festively. Unfortunately I must now spoil the beautiful hours with reviewing, but I do it with good-will as it is for the last number.

Farewell and think of me, the strange cross between the rich man and poor Lazarus.

Greet all the dear ones for me. And let me hear from you.

84.—To Kestner.

[Frankfort, December, 1772.]

There is the end of our critical course. In an epilogue I have befooled the public and the publisher, but take no notice of it. They may take it for balsam.*

If you will try it the next half-year, it is a venture of two guldens. Write to me about it. Greet dear Lotte and Lenchen, and adieu.

The comb has gone, and the missing appendices, except No. 6, which you still have to get.

85.—To Kestner.

Friday morning.

Last night I dreamt of Lotte, and as I awoke I sat up in bed and thought of all our existence, from the first

* He alludes to his and his friends' connexion with the *Gelehrten Anzeigen*.

meeting at Garbenheim, to the moonlight midnight conversation against the wall,* and further. It was a beautiful life, upon which I look back quite cheerfully. And how do you live with the angel? I am now quite a draughtsmàn, and especially happy in portraits. The girls say to me: Would that you had only pursued that in Wetzlar, and had brought us Lotte. Then I say that I should like to go over as soon as possible and draw you all. Then they think that would be no special consolation. But suppose the people over there, too, were glad at my coming.

It will be a singular spring. I do not see how all that we have spun will unravel; however, hopes are welcome to us, and the rest lies in the lap of the gods.

Here is a comic publication. A copy to Kielmannsegge, and greet him heartily, the other, perhaps, to Schneider. Will you not take a *Teutsche Merkur*,† of which I send a prospectus.

86.—To Kestner.

[(?) December, 1772.]

I cannot refrain from sending a few lines by to-day's post to your highnesses. Especially as we delighted our minds to-day with red cabbage and liver sausage. Will you forgive the odd-sized paper,‡ when the same attests that it has been prepared on the spot in the room of the virtuous Mlle. Gerock.§ Let it serve for the friendly news that, by reason of our immoderate manner of drinking wine yesterday evening, the peace of Christmas night was broken and destroyed by divers adventures as singular as they were annoying. We were, to wit, transported by a good spirit first to Wetzlar to the "Crown-Prince," amidst talkative company, whom the detestable devil had led to discuss still more detestable philosophy, and had entangled me in his snares; soon after that it fell heavily on my heart that I had not

* "15th Aug. 1772. I went with Goethe for a walk in the street at night until 12 o'clock; remarkable conversation, in which he was full of sadness and all sorts of fancies, at which at last we laughed, leaning against a wall in the moonlight."—*Kestner's Diary*. See K., p. 119.

† The *German Mercury*, a literary paper edited by Wieland.

‡ The size of the letter is large folio.

§ Antoinette Gerock, a connexion of Schlosser's.

seen Lotte yet; I hastened to my room to fetch my hat, which, however, I could not find, but was in a most incredible and wonderful manner driven, with an anxious heart, through chambers, halls, gardens, wildernesses, woods, picture-galleries, barns, bedrooms, reception-rooms, pig-sties, until at last a good spirit, in the form of the Crown-Prince Caspar, met me at a trinket shop and led me to my room over three granaries and corn-lofts, where unfortunately there was no key to be found, so that I resolved to mount up to the window over a roof and gutter. Danger and giddiness and falling and what not followed. Enough. I did not succeed in seeing Lotte. Also, that it was only towards morning that I fell into a sweet sleep, and only left my bed at about ½ past 8.

But now, however, I suppose your highnesses are scraping away many a quill in the cause of the purification of justice in the Holy Roman Empire,* and recovering yourselves from the scratching and scribbling in the sanctuary of the German Order,† while my boys scramble over one another like young cats: perhaps Albert is editing the continuation of the Christian in solitude: and George versifying like Gotter:‡ and the big ones are happily engaged in testing and analyzing themselves at Physics.

When his pipe the father smokes,
The Doctor Hofrath § hatches jokes,
Which for love he sells to Carrie;
Whilst Lotte up and down does hurry;
And Lenchen, glad of heart and true,
Into the wide world takes a view.
With dirty hands and honey-bread—
In German style—with plastered head
The boys hullo—a noisy crew—
In-doors and out, the courtyard through.
And you yourself, with light-blue eye,
Look on it as composedly

* In reference to the occasion of the visitation of the Imperial Commission at Wetzlar. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii.

† *I.e.* the *Teutsche Haus.*

‡ Mentioned several times above and in *Autobiog.*, bk. xii., as one of the Wetzlar circle. § Procurator and Hofrath von Brandt.

As though a toy of china-ware,
Yet really a true man you are,
An ardent friend, a lover firm.
Then foes of state and Christendom,
And Russ and Pruss and Belial,
May share as spoil this earthly ball,
If but the well-loved Teutsche roof
From this great sharing be aloof,
And hence to you the way remain,
Like Jacob's ladder, safe and plain,
And still our stomachs well digest;
With heart and mouth so be ye blest.
All praise to God on high,
My wife alone to me,
Thus He and also I
Contented well may be.

87.—To Kestner.

[Frankfort, 18 January, 1773.]

Before I go to bed I must say a good night to you and to the sweet Lotte, to whom, no doubt, many "good days" and "good evenings" have been said already to-day. Perhaps you are now sitting together, it is not much past 10. Perhaps you are dancing. Wherever you are you are happy and beloved of me more than of any one else here below. And I also am happy, am well in myself, for outwardly nothing is wanting to me. Adieu, dear ones. Write to me often, Kestner, I am very much of an artist now, and artists, you know, do not like writing. You shall have another drawing again to see.

88.—To Frau von La Roche.

Frankfort, 19 January, 1773.

Many thousand thanks for the dear packet. It has transferred me so completely to those bright, happy days, to yourself and your dearest ones, and has revived again all our conversations. Yet your punctuality has also put me to shame.

'Pygmalion'* is an excellent work; so much truth and kindliness of feeling, such genuineness in expression. May I venture to keep it for a while? It must be read to all those whose feeling I respect. Our Swabian Merck is a gentleman. I have not met our Darmstadt friend since your last letter; he is cheerful, works at all sorts of things, and just now has Leysering.† Perhaps, however, the term of your silence has expired, and you know all that and more besides.

Concerning Jerusalem's death, I only wrote the pragmatic result of my own reflexions; and that, indeed, was not much. I was waiting for a detailed and authentic information, which I am now able to send you. It has so often moved me deeply as I read it, and the conscientious detail quite carries me away.

Your story-teller is a dear youth, whom God preserve; I wish that his heart may always have many good things to tell, for he will always tell us them well.

The Duke of W[eimar], in the style of his expenditure, remains the same as ever. All success to the young hero;‡ we are exercising our imagination as to how his uniform suits him. And I trust that my memory has not as yet departed from your dwelling. In my imagination I shall never forget the moment, when I was compelled to separate myself from you and from your accomplished daughter, and with a heart full at parting, gave the last hand-kiss and said, Forget me not.

My sister wishes and hopes to make your acquaintance. We live happily together; her character has formed itself wonderfully quickly. How I wish that she were nearer to you. For one day, at least, of your life's journey, you would have, in truth, a dear companion. Farewell; and when you see the water flowing past your windows, then also remember us. We never see it flowing away without blessing it, and wishing that we were going with it.

GOETHE.

Could you not advise Wieland, in good part, to issue

* By Wieland.

† Leuchsenring, a prominent member of the Laroche circle. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xiii.

‡ Frese supposes this to refer to young Fritz von Laroche the eldest son, who was being trained by Wieland at Weimar.

the *Deutsche Merkur* monthly; writing of that kind awakens no appetite in the form of volumes.

89.—To Kestner.

[Frankfort, 19 January, 1773.]

We have just risen from table, and it occurs to me to wish you a good meal, and to send you a newspaper,* that you may see what it has become. The public here think the tone has not altered much.

Adieu, dear friend, greet dear Lotte, Lenchen and the boys for me; I am ever yours. Ask Lotte if she will accept my portrait; it is not indeed done yet, but if it were. Adieu. Greet Dorothy, too. Herewith you have your Jerusalem.†

90.—To Kestner.

[Frankfort, 26 January, 1773.]

God bless you, dear Kestner, when you think of me, for my sake. I am so used to have letters from you that it seems to me quite unfriendly when I rise from table and there is no letter.

Tell Lotte, a certain girl here, whom I love heartily, and whom I should certainly fix upon before all others if I had to marry, was also born on 11th January.‡ Such a couple of pairs would be very pretty. Who knows what is the will of God?

Certainly she ought to read philosophy; tell her. By God she will become quite another more splendid creature; error, prejudices, etc., will fall from her eyes like scales. And she will be as one of the divine gods.

Tell her that and give her the book, and if she reads down one page of it I will—carte blanche for the most horrible ragout the devil can invent—I will devour it. I think Lotte takes you and me for fools. She—in mid-

* Probably the *Gelehrten Anzeigen*. See Letters 81, 84.

† The account of his death which Kestner had sent to Goethe.

‡ Charlotte Buff's birthday. The other is supposed by Viehoff to be Antoinette Gerock (but Düntzer identifies her with Susanna M. Münch). In the next sentence he refers to the coincidence that he and Kestner were also born on one day, 28 August, 1749.

carnival and philosophy. Let her make herself a domino at once, and let her leave such whims of this Reuters alone—who, God knows, though she had all gifts, as St. Paul says, and spoke with the tongues and the wisdom of angels and men, yet she has not charity and is as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Tell the golden Lotte I would remember it against her if she played us such a trick.

Now adieu. The report of the visitation affair is not given in our newspaper. The publisher is afraid the devil might lurk behind it; here are the title and index. And also a number. Destroy it and the others too: I do not want it.

91.—To Kestner.

Thursday morning [28 January, 1773].

That was a wonderful 24 hours. Yesterday evening I adorned my fair friends for the ball, although I did not go with them myself. For one I put together, out of the fulness of her wealth, an aigrette of jewels and feathers, and ornamented her splendidly. And once it occurred to me: if you were but with Lotte and were decking her out like this. Then I went with Antoinette and Nanny upon the bridge for an evening walk. The water is very high, and it rushed loudly, the vessels were all crowded together, and the dear sad moon was greeted kindly, and Antoinette found everything as beautiful as Paradise, and everybody so happy who lives on the land, in the ships, and under God's heaven. I gladly left her the dear dreams, and would add still more to them if I could. We went home, and I translated Homer to them, which is now generally our favourite reading. The others had driven to the dance.

Last night a terrible storm awoke me at midnight. It raged and howled so that I thought of the ships and Antoinette, and thought myself well off in my civilized bed. Scarcely had I fallen asleep when the beat of the drum, the alarm and cry of fire awakens me: I spring to the window, and see the glow, bright but distant. I dress myself and am off. A large spacious house, the roof in full

flame. And the glowing beams and rafters, the flying sparks, and the storm in fire and clouds. It was tremendous. It burnt on, downwards and round about. I ran to our grandmother who lives over there. She was removing the plate. We brought away all the valuables in safety, and now awaited the will of fate. It lasted from 10 o'clock until broad daylight. The houses with wings and outbuildings, and also the neighbour's workshops lie in ruins. The fire is stifled, not extinguished. They are now a match for it, it will not break out again. And so I wish you a good meal: with exhausted faculties, rather as if I had danced, and other ideas in my imagination. How will my dancers have got home? Adieu, dear Lotte, dear Kestner.

92.—To Kestner.

[5 February, 1773.]

Then no news is good news, dear Kestner. Your perrukes are obstinate pates even until the water is over their head.* For now there's too much visitation; and may the good spirit of those gentlemen preach diligently to them on Ecclesiastes vii. 17.† Then all will be well: Now prepare yourself, Kestner. I am not coming to the wedding, but afterwards life will have some fun for me. I and all who know him through me are heartily glad that Kielmannsegge was so fortunate; wish him happiness for me.

With your letter I heard from Merck that he is coming. He will arrive early to-day Friday, and Leuschenring with him, and besides all that there is splendid skating ground where yesterday I honoured the sun rising and setting with circle-dances. And yet other subjects for joy which I cannot tell you. About which make yourself easy, that I am almost as happy as people who love each other like you, that there is just as much hope in me as in lovers, that I have since even felt a few poems, and so on. My sister greets you. My maidens greet you, my gods greet you. Namely the beautiful Paris here on the right,‡ the golden

* Probably referring to the judges of the Imperial commission.

† Possibly an error for v. 16, which would seem to have more point here: "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise."

‡ Casts from the antique with which his room was ornamented.

Venus there, and the messenger Mercury, who has pleasure in the swift, and who yesterday bound under my feet his god-like sandals, beautiful, golden, which carry him over the unfruitful sea and the limitless earth, with the breath of the wind. And so all the dear things in heaven bless you.

93.—To KESTNER.

[6 February, 1773.]

MERCK is here, dear Kestner, and greets you and Lotte. He has brought with him the enclosed *novum*, which I send you. Get me the numbers of the Giessen weekly paper, they contain the letter of Zimmermann about his interview with the king. They will be the first of this year. Great Lenchen and my boys.

94.—To KESTNER.

[11 February, 1773.]

AFTER so long a pause your letter was indeed a delight to me, and it is well that everything is as it is.

I am sorry for the Reuters and Lotte too. Merck has gone and has arranged a new paper under Lotte's face, as beautiful a blue as shines down from heaven. I had a long conversation with my father about her yesterday; which ended thus : Whether Kestner would not bring her over here soon, that they might get to know her too.

I am now preparing a grand piece of work for the press; when it is ready I shall come, to read it to you.

In the course of a few days I shall send you again quite a romantic *novum*. The maiden greets Lotte; in character she has much of Lenchen, and looks like her, my sister says, according to the silhouette. If we loved each other as much as you two—in the meantime I call her my dear little wife, for lately, at a party, where they were throwing dice for us bachelors, I fell to her. She had to beat 17, and had already given up all hope, when luckily she threw all sixes.* Adieu, old fellow. Remember me carefully to everybody.

* Possibly the young lady referred to later in *Autobiog.*, bk. xv. Mr. G. H. Lewes identifies both with Antoinette Gerock, but see Letter 90.

95.—To Kestner.

[22 February, 1773.]

You are going to dance. May you enjoy it. Everything is dancing around me. The Darmstadters, here, everywhere, and I sit in my watch-tower.

Remind Lotte of me at the ball. If not she shall do so to you as a punishment. Do not be lukewarm and lazy in writing. To Kielmannsegge everything good. Adieu.

G.

96.—To Kestner.

[25 February, 1773.]

You were advised to write that I had accused you to Lotte; it has occupied my head even in my watch-tower.

For a few days I have been in a bad way. It is the devil's work when one has to settle everything oneself, and self fails at last, but I am cheerful and work on. Of your destiny and your departure I cannot think: you should not have said anything about it to me, it pains me. *Fiat voluntas.*

Greet the angel, and God be with you.

97.—To Salzmann.

6 March, 1773.

Your observations concerning revenge have given me great pleasure. They are so like yourself, your mode of thought and style. My father thinks them quite worth printing, and I advise you to continue to write down your thoughts on the most noteworthy objects of religion and morality, and give us them some day in a little volume. I felt as if I were talking with you yourself; and their clearness of expression must captivate every one. What I missed, and certainly expected, because it was so exactly in your line, was the reflexion, that the pardon of an offence must, as a benefit conferred, put the offender under an obligation; and thus direct

advantage at once accrues, by "heaping coals of fire on the head," as Christ expresses it. Do not work at anything of this sort, without our having consulted together.

As regards the comedies, everything is going on as one could wish. An author who accepts advice is a rare phenomenon; and the gentlemen are generally not wrong, every one wants to fashion them according to his own style. Thus, dear friend, it is not a question of criticism here, but only of the side from which I look at it. Our stage, since "Hanswurst" has been banished, has not yet been able to emancipate itself from Gottschedianism.* We are moral and tedious. We have no sense for the "jeux d'esprit," which amongst the French have taken the place of indecency and buffoonery; our society and national character afford no patterns for them. Hence we are generally bored, and every one will be welcome who brings any liveliness, any stir, upon the stage. And I trust that from this point of view these comedies will be very popular. Only, you know that to be introduced into a decent company there is need of a dress cut according to the taste of the public to which I wish to present myself. Let us accordingly consult together about this coat. First of all, no singularity without purpose. That is what tells against the adoption of Latin names. Leander, Leonora, are creatures with whom we have long been acquainted; we see them as worthy old friends appearing on the boards again. Especially when the costume is modern, moreover, the king appears on the stage in Prussia, and the devil.

Talking of the devil, I must give my ideas in reference to cursing and swearing in the drama. When ordinary people quarrel, the application of justice is generally very short; it passes into curses, vituperations and blows, and the curtain falls. Moral people will, at most, break out into an oath, in a fit of passion, and these are the two sorts that I would allow to the drama, yet only as a kind of spice, and in such a way that they must necessarily remain, and that no one could eject them without damaging the expression. But the species of asseveration-curse I would altogether banish from the stage. In

* See *above*, pp. 5–8. Cf. *Autobiog.*, bk. vi. (trans. i. 214).

ordinary life they are annoying enough, and give evidence of an empty soul, as do all conventional expressions, and in the drama it may easily be regarded as a want of the faculty of dialogistic connexion. The translator * has, moreover, so often made insertions where Plautus has nothing. And I cannot but regard the "hercle" as nothing but our "in truth." You will find these remarks very strange indeed, when in my 'Berlichingen' you come upon many a vituperation and curse, of which at present I cannot give my justification.

You will, perhaps, all the rather agree with me, when you see that it is not noble feeling, but only a relative anxiety about the reception of these pieces.

Thus, as you see, this would be to treat second-rate questions in a very general way, and to say next to nothing at all. I want at present only to moot the preliminaries of our future consultations. For as regards the more particular execution, how I should wish him in some passages to draw nearer again to Plautus, and in others to deviate still from him, or how the language, the expression, the whole structure of the scenes might be improved in finish, about this I would not enter into any detail. The author must feel that himself, and if he likes to communicate his ideas about the whole to me, I will willingly tell him mine, too; for otherwise I should write in vain. Whatever so pleases him in my method of representation, that he is able to amalgamate it with his own feeling, and whether after any newly evoked feeling he has the courage again to go over his work here and there — this the event will show. I hate all specific criticism of passages and words. The head from which it issued, as such, is a whole, and self consistent, if only the author is in any way original. I can endure my friends condemning a work of mine to the fire, to be recast or burnt; but they shall not remove a single word or alter a letter. Only we must bear in mind, that this time we have to deal with the public, and especially to employ every means to make the thing acceptable and pleasing to the directors of the companies, which especially is effected

* The translator was really Lenz, but he did not wish his name to be divulged. See Düntzer, p. 182.

by an outwardly decent garb. For it is being acted that constitutes their success. But if one takes away the living voices, the stage effect, caricature, action, and show, they lose very much indeed. Even in the original, few scenes transport us into everyday life; one sees everywhere the guy's masks with which they have been acted.

And now, farewell, and answer soon; we must strike the iron whilst it is hot, and when we have carried the matter through we will set about something fresh. If I could only spend half a day with you, we should effect more than with any number of epistles. At the same time it is also a blessing to greet one another at a distance, to love as I truly love you, and to be able to say so to one another.

GOETHE.

98.—To KESTNER.

[15 March, 1773.]

THANK you, dear Kestner, for your news and everything. Here is a letter enclosed to Hans, who must write to me from week to week how it fares with you in the "*Teutsche Haus*," for you are in a condition in which one gathers no flowers, yet I cannot do without them, and must contrive a connexion with the *Teutsche Haus*, when you will have stolen the keystone out of the arch. For I shall love them all my whole life long, for her sake; and their faces will all be to me like visions of the gods.

Adieu; as with you just now there is a crashing, after the fashion of a boat being brought ashore, so is there a storming and crashing in the fleet in which I serve. For my own ship I care the least. Towards the spring and summer divers destinies hang over my dearest ones, and I am killing time, which after all is an art. Adieu.

99.—To HANS BUFF.

MUCH BELOVED HERR HANS,

Your letter to my dear sister has so much delighted me, that I can no longer refrain from writing to you, and begging you to give me at least once a week news of your house and household, and of what goes on therein.

I ask you this for the sake of our old friendship, which will continue steadfast in the future. You know how heartily dear to me is everything that comes from the *Teutsche Haus;* you have had me for a good while as familiar with you as a cousin, and perhaps more familiar. Therefore, as I say, dear Hans, be sure to write to me once a week what goes on, that I may know how my little ones behave themselves, and remember me to Caroline and Lenchen, and Lotte, when she returns, many hundred times. Yours,

GOETHE.

100.—To JOHANNA FAHLMER,* AT FRANKFORT.

Frankfort, March, 1773.

THE kindly sun has already given you a morning greeting, which is far more valuable than mine. And yet that is not altogether to be despised. So I bid you good-morrow and send you words, and Wakefield,† and—what is more, a dictionary, in which, at your own good pleasure, you can seek and find meaning and pronunciation. And this comes to pass, because it would seem as if you were to have a lazy teacher a few days longer. For I find myself in a state of agitation, in which, as they say, it is not good for our souls to leave this world. Yet withal, since it is unmixed with any vexation or anxiety, I am content. May you also be so, and by the side of the stream that flows on so sweetly, may you feel, not too vividly, how beautiful it would be if, favoured by spring's sun and sky, you were to sail down into the joy and bliss of the elect; and may God in his mercy grant this to all of us. Amen.

* Johanna Katharina Sibylla Fahlmer was the daughter of a Councillor of the Palatinate, by a second marriage. An elder half-sister had married a merchant named Jacobi, and became the mother of the well-known poet, Johann Georg, and the philosopher Friedrich Heinrich, or Fritz Jacobi. Johanna Fahlmer was therefore their aunt, and is addressed by Goethe in the same way. She afterwards married J. G. Schlosser, whose first wife had been Goethe's sister.

† Goldsmith's '*Vicar of Wakefield.*' Goethe was teaching her English.

101.—To Kestner.

[? March, 1773.]

It is very abominable and unkind of you not to entrust to me the commission of the rings. As if it were not natural that I must undertake it. And, in spite of you, and the devil who prompted you to wrong me, I will order them, and take care that they shall be as beautiful as crowns of the elect. And nothing about me to your angel. Hans is good; thank him. Adieu.

102.—To Kestner.

[? March, 1773.]

That you did not have the rings a week ago is not my fault; here they are, and they ought to please you. I, at least, am satisfied with them. They are the second pair. A week ago the fellow sent me a pair so botched and bungled —— Away! he must make fresh ones; and they are good, I think. Let them be the first links of the chain of bliss which shall bind you to earth as to a paradise; I am yours, but from henceforth not at all curious to see you or Lotte. And on Easter-day, which will, it is to be hoped, be your wedding-day, her portrait shall be moved from my room, or perhaps even the day after to-morrow, and it shall not hang there again until I hear that she is a mother; then a new epoch begins, and I shall not love her any more, but her children, a little, indeed, for her sake, but that does not matter; and if you ask me to be godfather, my spirit shall rest doubly on the boy, and he shall make a fool of himself for girls who are like his mother.

God Hymen finds himself, by a happy chance, on the back of my letter.*

Be happy, then, and go. I am glad you are not coming

* On the back of the original there is a pencil-drawing by Goethe, probably from the antique, representing the god Hymen with torches. —K.

to Frankfort; if you came I should go away. To Hanover, then, and good-bye. I have sealed up Lotte's ring, as you told me. Adieu.

103.—To Charlotte Buff.*

May the remembrance of me be ever with you, like this ring, in your happiness. Dear Lotte, after a long time we shall see each other again, you with the ring on your finger, and I ever yours.

I know no name, nor surname. You know me well enough.

[Address.]—To *Charlotte Buff*, formerly called *dear Lotte*, to be delivered in the *Teutsche Haus*.

104.—To Hans Buff.†

Dear Herr Hans,‡ I thank you heartily for remembering me; do not become tired of writing to me. I am often very lonely, and such a dear little letter pleases me very much. God reward you, if I cannot do so properly, and make you tall and strong, and happy as you are good.

Goethe.

105.—To Kestner.§

[? 6 April, 1773.]

God bless you, for you have surprised me. On Good Friday I was going to make a holy sepulchre, and bury Lotte's silhouette. So she hangs there still, and shall hang there, too, until I die. Farewell. Greet your angel and Lenchen; she must become Lotte the second, and everything will go as well with her. I wander in deserts where no water is, my hair is my shade, and my blood my well. And yet your ship, just in port, with

* Enclosed in the preceding.

† Some of these letters are differently placed both by A. Kestner and Hirzel.

‡ Hans Buff was now sixteen years old.

§ This letter was probably written immediately after the marriage of Kestner and Charlotte Buff, which took place on Palm Sunday, 4 April, a week earlier than Goethe had anticipated. Cf. Letter 102. See K., p. 23.

gay flags and shouts, makes me glad. I am not going to Switzerland. And below and above God's heaven I am your friend and Lotte's.

106.—To Johanna Fahlmer, in Frankfort.

[Good Friday, 9 April, 1773.]

During all this year we have never spent such a solemn and holy morning as this. As I sprang to my window, and heard the little birds, and saw the budding almond-trees, and the hedges all green under the glorious sky, I could no longer, dear aunt, dear niece,* withhold from you the good spring feelings of warm youth; for therewith I trust you will be more edified by holy Life than by the Holy Sepulchre. May you forgive yourself for not going out with me yesterday. God grant no more such days, and preserve us from hoop-petticoats, tredille, reversino,† and all chattering of jaws. *Addio.*

107.—To Kestner.

[? 10 April, 1773.]

You do well indeed, Kestner, to take me at my word! O the excellent man! "You wish then to know nothing more of us." Very fine! I certainly wished to know nothing of you, because I knew you would not care to write to me. Formerly, fine sir, the day was for your Prince, the evening for your Lotte, and the night for me and my brother Sleep. The night flows away now in the evening, and poor Goethe puts up with it as usual. It would suit you very well—— But that I will not say, I would rather give myself to the devil, than bring you to that. So Herr Kestner, and Madame Kestner, good-night.

I would have ended here if something better awaited me in bed than my dear brother. But just look at my bed, it stands as sterile as a desert. And to-day I have

* He refers to Charlotte Katharina (Lotte) Jacobi, the younger half-sister of the brothers Jacobi (see note, p. 128), who, with her aunt, Johanna Fahlmer, was now in Frankfort. See Urlichs (*Br. v. Goethe an J. Fahlmer*, p. 25).

† Games of cards.

had a beautiful day, so beautiful that work and joy and striving and enjoyment have flowed together, so that on this fair, high, starry evening my whole heart was full of the wonderful moment when I played with Lotte's trimming at your feet, and spoke, ah, with a heart which was no longer to enjoy *that* life beyond, and meant only the mountains and not the clouds.* To go away from Lotte; I do not understand yet how it was possible. For only look; be not a stock. Who, either now, or before, or afterwards said to you, go away from Lotte. Now what would you——? That is not the question. Now I am no stock either, and I went away; and say you, is it an heroic deed or what? I am satisfied with myself and I am not. It cost me little, and yet I do not understand how it was possible. There's where the shoe pinches——

We talked of how it looked yonder beyond the clouds; that I do not know indeed, but I do know our Lord God must be a very cold-blooded person if he leave you Lotte. When I die and have somewhat to say up there, I shall fetch her from you verily. Therefore pray nicely for my life and health, calves and stomach, &c.; and if I die, propitiate my soul with tears, sacrifices, and such like, otherwise, Kestner, it will look queer.

I do not know why I am such a fool as to write thus, just about the time when you with your Lotte are certainly not thinking of me. But I content myself willingly according to the law of antipathy. For we avoid those who love us, and love those who avoid us.

108.—To Kestner.†

[11 April, 1773.]

I closed the letter of yesterday evening at once; so, as to your Pro Mem.

1. Use the supplement as you please. If you wish to have the journals bound why add the hog-wash of imperial affairs to them, it was expressly so arranged that they could be thrown away. Besides, the volume will be too thick. But I will ask about the numbers.

* Comp. Letter 59.

† Hirzel does not give this letter.

2. Does Herr von Hille want a *Mercury* for himself alone? And how is Falk; does he now take the copy alone which you wished to share with him?

3. The plays are in my hands. To-day is so beautiful that I should like to go for a walk with you. Adieu. Greet Hans.

109.—To Hans Buff.

Herewith I send you, my dear Herr Hans, something from the fair, which I hope will serve for waistcoat and breeches; if any is wanting, write and say so without ceremony. When you are wearing it, and are running about, going a-hunting, or are otherwise lively, think of me. Kiss Lotte's hand and Lenchen's from me, and the little ones many hundred times, from your friend,

Goethe.

110.—To Kestner.

[14 April, 1773.]

Wednesday. I missed Annchen yesterday, and am now going thither.* I half feared it might be you playing me a trick, for I go to-morrow to Darmstadt, and every body would have been sorry. Annchen takes your plays with her. Also a parcel to Hans. I still have the subscription ticket for the biblical engravings; I will keep it, and when they come out you dispose of them. Annchen also brings you back 2 fl. 30 kr. out of the Carolines. The big one cost a ducat, the little one 3 fl. 30. Also your ring. I will keep Lotte's garnet ring which I have seen on her finger and kissed on her finger so many thousand times; it shall lie among my jewels until I have a maiden who shall wear it. Greet your angel and Lenchen lovingly for me and write about the *Mercury* to my sister, who greets you.

Annchen is dear and good; she has brought me Lotte's bridal nosegay well preserved, and to-day I have worn it. I hear that Lotte is still more beautiful, dearer and better than formerly; and that you and she are not coming is in every way unkind. Greet Lenchen and her friend

* Anna Sophie Brandt, who had come to the Easter Fair at Frankfort.

Dorothy for me. Anne has told me everything, how they sleep together, and share everything except lovers, how the quasi councillor continues to be an ass, &c. Everything was reported, and I was delighted to hear of you, as formerly I wished to gather currants and shake down plums to-day, to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, and my whole life long.

Greet Schneider if he remembers me, and Kielmansegg. Pottocelli brought me a greeting from him yesterday at the fair. We have a circus-rider here, and plays and Chinese shadows and puppet shows. You may tell Lotte that I would have shown her all this if she had come, but now—if even it were good—— Shadows, puppets!

111.—To Kestner.

[15 April, 1773.]

Now I want no more, dear Kestner; that was what I wished, what I would not claim (for the freewill gives all the worth to gifts of love) from the lap of your happiness, beside your Lotte, whom I gladly give up to you before a thousand others, like all the good which the gods deny to me. But that you, because luck has shuffled the cards for you, play the ace of spades and make a scornful face at me, and go to your wife, I think unkind; you must accuse yourself of it to Lotte, and she can decide.

To call her envious and quarrelsome and such like, all that is only since you have been married. My whims may count for nothing. I went with Annchen to the play. It is well that I am going to Darmstadt to-morrow, I am really falling in love with her. Her presence has made every memory of you surge up again within me—all my life amongst you. I should have liked to relate everything, even to the clothes and attitudes, so vividly; she may tell you what she can. O Kestner, when have I grudged you Lotte in a human sense: for not to grudge you her in a holy sense, I must be an angel without lungs and liver. But I must disclose to you a secret, that you may understand and look. When I attached myself to Lotte—and that I did as you know from the bottom of my heart—Born spoke to me about it, *as people do speak:* "If I were

K. I should not like it. What can come of it? You quite loosen his hold on her," and such like. Then I said to him, with these words, in his room; it was in the morning: "I am now fool enough to consider the girl as exceptional; if she is deceiving me and is ordinary enough to be using K. as capital in her business in order to display her charms more profitably, the first moment which disclosed that to me, the first which brought her nearer to me, would be the last of our acquaintance," and that I protested and swore. And between ourselves, without boasting, I understand something of the girl; and you know how I have remained, and do remain for you and for all that she has seen, touched, and wherever she has been, until the end of the world. And now look how far I am envious and must be so. For either I am a fool, which is hard to believe, or she the most artful deceiver, or then—Lotte, the very Lotte of whom I speak——

I go to-morrow on foot to Darmstadt, and have in my hat the remains of her bridal nosegay. Adieu. It pains me to go away from Annchen; what would it be from you? It is better so, only it vexes me that I have not taken her portrait. But it is living in heart and mind. Adieu. I have nothing but a heart full of wishes. Good night, Lotte. Annchen said to-day I had always uttered the name Lotte so beautifully. "Uttered!" thought I!

112.—To Kestner.

Darmstadt [21 April, 1773].

Thank you, Kestner, for your two dear letters, dear like everything which comes from you, and especially now. The death of a dearly beloved friend still troubles me.* To-day early she was buried, and I am ever at her grave waiting to give up there the breath and warmth of my life, and be a voice out of the stone to the future. But alas, it is even forbidden me to set up a stone to her memory, and it angers me that I may not fight against twaddle and gossip.

Dear Kestner, rejoice in God that you have for your life

* He refers to the death of Fräulein von Rousillon, an attendant of the Duchess of Pfalz-Zweibrücken, and an intimate friend of Merck's, by whom she was called Urania. See Düntzer, *Leben*, p. 185.

a horn of plenty in your hand. My poor existence is freezing into a barren rock. This summer, all is departing—Merck to Berlin with the court, his wife to Switzerland, my sister, Fräulein Flachsland, you, everybody. And I am alone. If I take no wife, nor hang myself, then say that I like life very well, or something which does me more honour, if you will. Adieu. A thousand greetings to your angel.

113.—To Kestner.

Darmstadt, Sunday.
[28 April, 1773.]

Dear Kestner, you know my life does not permit of detail, and to-day perhaps less than ever. There was confusion to-day, quite a mad and wonderful experience. Sunday! How quietly you will have been sitting beside Lotte.

In a fortnight we are all separated, and it all happens in such a hurry that I do not know where my head is, nor what hope and fear are. God forgive the gods who play with us so. At the grave—I will know nothing about it, will forget everything. Do you forget everything in Lotte's arms, and then work your daily work, enjoy the sun, and let my love for you be present with you in the hours of rest.

I have recevied Hans' letter and your postscript. Tell him he must go more into details. He thinks he must only write remarkable events. Is not everything over there remarkable?

114.—To Kestner.

[3 May, 1773.]

Dear Kestner, I am again in Frankfort, and, God be praised, we have had wonderful scenes, and soon all the gaieties will be over.

How are you, and how long do you still remain? The Flachsland is married to Herder. Have you heard anything of it already? The day before yesterday I was present at the wedding, and yesterday I came over here.

I send you the *Mercury* in duplicate; take care that I receive the money. The two come to exactly 9 fl.

Adieu, dear friend; kiss Lotte, one for my sake too. Adieu.

115.—To Kestner.

Merck has gone, and I expect, Herder; and you are going too. Adieu, dear ones all. Wieland is a better scribbler than agent. I have no *Mercurys* yet, which makes me cursedly angry. Falk's manuscript, the missing appendix, and all, you shall have. Will you kindly take a little packet for me to Boie, even if you are not going through Gottingen? God guide you. My good spirit has given me a heart to bear everything—I am calmer than formerly.

116.—To Kestner.

[May, 1773.]

I sent to most of the inns immediately after your news that Kielmansegge was here, but could not find him out. Now Pottozelli tells me he has gone again, having heard I was not here. Tell him he should not have gone away so; I was back here on Monday and he went away on Wednesday. I had been thinking of him at the very time, and wishing to be with him. Tell him that, of our edition of Ossian, the first part, consisting of Fingal, is ready, and costs 36 kreuzers; if he wants it I will send it him with the remainder and beg for my Ossian back. I do not know whether I have already asked you in a previous letter to take something to Boie; tell me the exact date when you are going. How is your angel? I have great doings with her. Her silhouette is fastened with pins to the wall, and I miss nearly all my pins; and when I want one at my toilette I generally borrow one from Lotte, and first ask leave, &c.

Something annoys me. In Wetzlar I composed a poem that by rights nobody ought to understand better than you. I should like so much to send it to you, but have no copy of it left. Boie has one through Merck, and I believe it will come out in the *Musen-Almanach*.* It is entitled "The Wanderer," and begins: "God bless thee, thou young wife."† You would have recognised it at once without that. So far then, dear Kestner, Lotte knows how much I love her. Adieu. G.

* See Letter 157, and note. † Reprinted in his poems.

117.— To Kestner.

I have tried in all sorts of ways, but Mez* remains stiff and firm about it. At last he struck off the kreuzers. Here are the accounts.

The *Mercury* comes on Friday, and the little packet for Boie.

May all good spirits bless your journey. I am busy enough and contented. My solitude suits me well, as long as it lasts. Adieu, dear Lotte; now for once in good earnest, adieu.

118.—To Frau von Laroche.

Fr[ankfort,] 12 May, 1773.

I am writing to you this time only about the delivery of goods, for the firm Merck & Co. Here are twelve copies of Ossian; one of the bound ones he begs you to accept.

Leysering will tell you wonderful stories, and I also have much to say to you; as soon as all is quiet around me it will be every consolation to me to be able to write to you, how I am feeding myself on the hope of seeing you again this summer, for I am alone, and daily become more so. And yet I wish to endure it; that souls which are created for one another, so seldom find each other, and are generally divided, but that in the moments of happiest union least recognize each other! that is a sad riddle.

Renew the remembrance of me amidst your dear ones, with whom you live so happily, and in the heart of your dear absent one.†

Goethe.

119.—To Assessor C. G. Hermann,‡ Leipsic.

This letter may convince you, dear Assessor, that your memory is still on the same footing with me as at

* Metz was a stationer in Frankfort.
† Probably Herr von Laroche.
‡ See Letter 26, p. 58.

the time when, after a few days' impromptu absence, I walked again into your room and bid you good-day. So I bid you now good-day, and put before you the matter which is on my mind.

The publisher of the journal of this place—the *Gelehrten* of course—has had a quarrel on account of a Götzian review,* not so much with Götz as with the council of this town: he was sentenced to a fine of 20 thalers and claimed *transmiss. in vim rev.* Perhaps you know of the affair already from the printed reports which must be known in Leipsic. He now finds that the matter has reached the Leipsic faculty and that they are disposed to augment the fine. He has asked me urgently whether I do not know someone who has influence. I know no one but you, and now the question is whether you stand in such relation with the members of the faculty that you can, and further whether you have so much general kindliness that you will. You see the decision lies *in mero arbitrio*, and also in the manner in which it presents itself to the judge. There is no question of right: as you could easily see if you could just read the reports. So, my friend, one good word to save a poor devil a hundred thalers, or if you are not able to intercede, perhaps you know a way and will be so good as to show it to us.

In a few weeks you will get a piece of work from me, which, God willing, ought to please you. A thousand remembrances to dear Oeser. I hope that Merck, a friend of mine from Leipsic, has seen him.† Just ask him about it. Love me and write to me soon. Written at Frankfort, 15 May, 1773. GOETHE.

120.—To KESTNER.

I HAVE forgotten, dear K., to send the appendices in the last package. No. 6 by an oversight has never been

* He refers to Deinet, the publisher (and now editor) of the *Fr. Gelehr. Anzeigen*. In the 58th number (31 July, 1772) a work by Pastor Götz, of Hamburgh, was criticized with keen humour—in all probability by Goethe.—See O. J., p. 247. Was this Götz Lessing's antagonist Goeze?

† Merck went through Leipsic on his way to St. Petersburg: Nicolai saw him there for a few hours (*Briefe an Merck*, iii. 63).—O. J.

printed. Farewell, and love me, and write to me how it fares with you and your angel on the way. Adieu. Falk's manuscript I send after you; so forgive me.

121.—To Hans Buff.

Lotte is gone now, and I take as much interest in her being away as one of the household. But notwithstanding this, dear Hans, we will not cease to write to one another. You always hear the soonest anything about our Lotte, and you must tell it faithfully to me. Greet dear Lenchen for me, and tell her that now Lotte is away and she is a second Lotte for you, she must be so for me also, and I am longing to see her; if it is possible I will come in the summer.

Adieu, dear Hans. Remember me to Papa, and greet the young ones for me.

If sister Caroline remembers me, kiss her hand, and to Sophy and Amalie one or two kisses from me.

G.

122.—To Kestner.*

[Frankfort, 16 June, 1773.]

Your letter delighted me; I had already heard a good deal about you from Hans. Last night I dreamt wonderfully of Lotte. I led her arm-in-arm through the avenue and all the people stood still and looked at her. I can still name a few who remained standing and looking at us. Suddenly she drew on a hood, and the people were very much surprised. (That comes from Hans' letter that told me the Minden story.) I begged her to throw it off, and she did so, and looked at me with her eyes (you know very well how one feels when she looks at one). We walked quickly. The people looked as before. "Oh, Lotte," I said to her, "Lotte, may they only not hear that you are the wife of another." We came to a dancing-place, &c., &c.

* Kestner had now returned with his wife to his home in Hanover, where he was appointed secretary of the Royal Archives. See K., p. 224.

And so I dream and wander through life, carry on dirty law-suits, write plays and novels, and such like, drag, push, and drive it as quickly as it will go. And you are blessed like the man who fears the Lord. People say of me, that the curse of Cain lies upon me. I have slain no brother! And I think people are fools. Here you have a piece of work,* dear Kestner; read it aloud to your little wife when you are together with God and yourselves, and have locked the doors.

N.B. The Frau Archivarius† (I hope that is the right title) has not, it is to be hoped, left off from pitiful pride her blue-striped dressing-jacket, or bestowed it on a little sister; it would annoy me very much, for I seem to love it almost more than herself; at least, the little jacket often appears to me when her features cannot be made out in the haze of the imagination.

123.—To Hans Buff.

I have several matters, dear Hans, on which I must write to you. First, to ask how you all are. I have heard nothing from the Teutsche Haus for so long.

And afterwards, commissions which, if you execute properly, you shall some day become agent for electors, princes, and the estates of the empire.

First, forward the letter to Kestner like the former one.

2ndly, kindly go to Herr Hofrath Sachs, and say, "Here is a letter for Herr von Kielmansegge. Will you be so good as to forward it to him." The Baron wrote to me that I should address my letters to the Hofrath.

Thirdly, ask Herr von Hille whether he has received through Herr Kestner a first volume of the *Teutsche Merkur*, if so I shall be obliged to him for the half louis d'or, and will immediately send him the second volume by the post-cart to Wetzlar.

Fourthly, ask Papa if he has read a new play, 'Götz von Berlichingen.'

* A copy of *Götz von Berlichingen*, which was published this summer.

† See note, preceding page.

Fifthly, greet everybody for me in the "Teutsche Haus," Lenchen, and Caroline, and Dorothy, and Annchen, and ask them whether they still remember me in respect and love. And greet all the little ones for me, and write to me soon.

GOETHE.

124.—À M. DEMARS,* LIEUTENANT À NEUF-BRISAC.
Avec un packet.

[Frankfort, Summer, 1773.]

IT is summer, dear friend, and that is not a season of intimacy and social intercourse. One runs away here, the other there, and thus our pleasant society is broken up, and with great difficulty I keep together the pitiful remnant thereof.† . . . When will you come back, beneficent winter, to bind fast the waters, that we may again begin our skating-dances! When will you drive our girls indoors again. . . . And then, dear Demars, you too shall hear how matters go on, or have changed, and must also write to me. I herewith send you a drama ‡ of mine. It ought to make its fortune amongst soldiers, whether amongst French I do not know. Adieu.

GOETHE.

125.—TO FRAU VON LAROCHE.

[Frankfort, 11 July, 1773.]

I WILL willingly stay this month in Frkf., and another, too, in the hope of seeing you; for so I explain to myself the dark passages of your letter. Leave me still in doubtfulness, then the joy will be all the greater to me, even if such a sweet sympathy as yours over my Götz astonishes me. I have wished for it, that I willingly confess, in part also hoped; but you know how it is with one.

You would do Merck a favour, for he is publisher here

* This correspondent, a French officer, is not mentioned in the *Autobiog.*

† Compare Letters 113, 115.

‡ See note (*), last page.

also,* if you let the enclosed copies be made 24 instead of 48 kr. the piece. I do not know whether I have already thanked you in the name of the painter for the remittance.

My Jahrmarkt† I propose to read to you myself and to tell you much. And so a hundred greetings to your dear ones.

GOETHE.

126.—To KESTNER.

[Frankfort, 19 July, 1773.]

YOU shall hear constantly how it fares with me, dear Kestner. For in the course of my life my hope will ever be in you and your wife, whom God bless and give to her as much joy as she is good. Preferment cannot fail you. You are of the race of men who thrive and increase on earth, one of the righteous people who fear the Lord, therefore he has even given you a virtuous wife, on whose account live long!

I am very diligent, and if fortune is good you will soon receive something in a different style. I wish Lotte was not indifferent about my drama. I have already various little wreaths of approbation of divers leaves and flowers, even Italian flowers, which I have tried on alternately, and have laughed at myself before the glass. The gods have sent me a sculptor, and if he finds work here as we hope, I shall then forget much. Holy muses reach to me, out of your vessels, the *aurum potabile*, the *elixir vitae* for which I languish. How much it costs to dig wells and to build a hut in the desert. And my parrots, which I have brought up, which chatter with me, like myself, are ill and let their wings hang. A year ago to-day it was quite different, I could swear at this hour a year ago I was sitting with Lotte. I am working up my situation into a drama in defiance of God and men.‡

I know what Lotte will say when she comes to see it,

* See note (‡), p. 109.

† The *Jahrmarktsfest* (Fair) *zu Plundersweilern*, a comic piece, written about this time.

‡ This evidently refers to the composition of *Werther*.

129.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? September,* 1773.]

I have said about your Letters, not what I wished, but what I was obliged. Thus it was from heart to heart, and therefore not a word is lost, for in point of fact there are no words.

You ask me whether you should recommend the *Iris* † to my sister? What does your conscience tell you? and if it said yes, why do you ask me? I have written my opinion to her; it seemed to me that she ought to speak for herself, and ought not to call on her friends to contribute for the sake of a stranger with whom she has never had, nor can have, anything in common, and whose boldness is unpardonable in begging for the sender's commission in addition to his own; and after that she may now do as she pleases.

I have written thus, and now do what you can, and my sister may do what she likes; on this occasion again the smallness of men has come home most remarkably to me, and my case is the same as the *Dom Dechant's*,‡ who carries the follies of his opponents, like a string of pearls, round his neck.

I wish Jacobi many half-pistoles, and in this respect I have forgiven him the other: that they further the rascal's usury with their name is good indeed, only let them leave me and mine unfleeced, for, methinks also they might be convinced that we will have nothing to do with them.

Now I have finished, dear Mama, it occurs to me that I am unjust to the Jacobis; have not I then also insin-

* This letter must have been written when his sister was staying at Darmstadt. *Vide* Letter 133, to Kestner.

† A paper edited by Fritz Jacobi. See note (*). p. 128. Goethe, though intimate with their female relatives, was at this time much prejudiced against the brothers Jacobi.

‡ i.e. Cathedral Dean. He refers to the Freiherr von Hohenfeld, a friend of Herr von Laroche.

uated myself among their wives, aunts, and sisters, which gives them, according to the strictest compensation, a right over my Cornelie. Oho!

My parents and Fräul. v. Klettenb. greet you heartily. I cannot do without your Max as long as I live, and I shall venture always to love her.

130.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? September 1773.]

About the book, dear Mama, something definite.

You want the little book translated. Will you undertake the translation at your own expense and afterwards seek a publisher? or, would it not be better to give the bookseller the little book as it is, and let him see to it? You will get from the bookseller 500 copies at once instead of cash payment. He will see to the translation, and print. on the condition of 500 copies. But the price cannot be fixed until it is finished. How much could be laid out on it? In what style shall it be, what kind of paper would be required?

Adieu, best Mama. Good-day dear sister—* Greeting to Herr v. G.

I wish you had seen my bargain, with the Apollo, a few days ago. G.

131.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? September, 1773.]†

Thank you, dear Mama, for both the Letters; they have expressed to me the whole true state of your mind, and I am certain that if you continue to write, in your own strain, on subjects of predominant interest, the whole must have a very excellent effect, only you must allow me to communicate my good counsel on the binding and arrangement of the volumes.‡

* See last letter, note *.

† The order of these letters is doubtful, and that adopted by Frese has been occasionally departed from.

‡ The book referred to is *Rosaliens Briefe* (Rosalie's letters) by Frau von Laroche.—F.

For example, the apotheosis of Brechter* in the second letter is evidently premature. The altar must first be built, decorated and consecrated, before the relics are disposed therein, and I would have wished to see the whole situation transplanted farther on when the character and the mind of Rosalie had been more developed, as I should even have liked to see the whole seasoned with the sweet melancholy of mistaken feeling which fills the first letter; and I beg you, if it does not lie too much beyond the limits of your design, to open the first letter with quite simple detail, in which feeling and spirit alone shine forth. That is all I have to say.

The dear little wife† has written to you something about a work which I have begun since you have been away,‡ really begun, for I never had the idea of making a perfect whole out of the subject. You shall have it as soon as it is finished.

I cannot and do not wish to go to Düsseldorf. You know that certain acquaintances are to me like certain countries, I could be a traveller for a hundred years without feeling any call thither. G.

132.—To Frau von Laroche.

Herewith I send the Herder; the marks denote errors of printing, nothing more. Yesterday evening I read Rosalie's meeting with the poor Henrietta. It is splendidly touching, but the opening is positively *grand.* Will you allow me to add a few touches to the history of the good boy, which a short time ago in the coach you wove into the story and which we omitted in the paper?§ To dear Max my heart's greetings. (D. L. M. m. H. G.)‖ G.

* The pastor at Heilbronn, by whose advice Frau von Laroche turned her mental experiences to literary purposes.—F.

† Helene Elizabeth, the wife of Kammerrath Friedrich (Fritz) Jacobi, who was in Frankfort about this time. The relationships of this family, owing to second marriages, are puzzling, and Urlich's account, in his *Briefe v, Goethe an Johanna Fahlmer*, is somewhat confused. Cf. See letter to Kestner, No. 133.

‡ See next letter.

§ This letter must have been written shortly after a visit to Frankfort which Frau von Laroche made in August. See Frese, p. 145.

‖ *Der lieben Max meine Herzensgrüsse.*

133.—To Kestner.

[15 September, 1773.]

This evening, 15 September, I have received your letter, and have mended myself a pen in order to write a great deal. I hope that my spirits reach to Lotte, even if she will not spend the small change of her feelings, to which the husband has no claim, on me, who love her so much. Not long ago I was much troubled in a dream about her. The danger was pressing, my plans all without hope. We were guarded, and I had every hope, if I could speak to the prince. I stood at the window, and thought about jumping down; it was two storeys high. You will break your leg, I thought, then you will be caught again; and, thought I, if only a good friend were passing by I should spring down, and if I broke a leg, he would be obliged to carry me on his shoulder to the prince. You see I still remember it all down to the coloured cover of the table at which she sat and netted, with her little straw box beside her. I kissed her hand a thousand times. Her very hand! the hand! it is still so vividly before me; and see how I still trouble myself with dreams.

My sister and Schlosser are on the same terms as before. He is still in Carlsruhe, where he is taken about, God knows how. I don't understand it. My sister is now in Darmstadt with her friends. I lose much in her—she understands and bears with my whims.

I, my good man, let my father do just as he likes now, and he tries daily to involve me more in the civil affairs of the town, and I let it go on as long as my strength remains in me! A rent! and all the seven-fold fibre-cords are asunder. I am also much calmer, and see that one finds human nature everywhere great and little, beautiful and ugly. Besides, I go on bravely working, and intend to push forward all sorts of things this winter.

I have sent a Götz to the old Bailiff, who has had great pleasure in it; it has even gone further (probably through the Brandts), and the chamberlains Richt[er] and von Folz

have begged for it—Hans, with whom I carry on much correspondence, writes this to me. Amidst all this, dear K., I am forgetting to tell you that at this moment in the reception-room below sits—the dear lady great-aunt Lange of Wetzlar with the dear girl her eldest niece. They have often before in their lives had to sit without me on Lotte's account, so this time too they may take care of themselves.

Hannchen is not with them. They have said much that is loving and good of my Lotte. The devil thank them for it—*of my Lotte!* I wrote that without thinking, and yet she is in a certain measure mine. Herein it is the same with me as with other honourable people; I am sensible up to this point. So no more of this.

Now to the *Mercury* to recover ourselves. I do not know whether much boasting does most harm to the affair, or the affair to the boasting. It is wind and idle talk, which is a shame. People have been generally dissatisfied, the second volume is somewhat better.

Hans and the little Hanses, [*i.e.*] Wieland and the Jackalls * have just been selling themselves. Good luck to it! They have not written for me moreover. Good-bye to them! The minister Jacobi's wife has been here, a very dear nice woman; I have been able to get on with her very well, have avoided all explanations, and have acted as if she had neither husband nor brother-in-law. She would have tried to reconcile us, but I do not like their friendship. They must compel me to esteem them as much as I now despise them, and then I will and must love them.

Early to-day I received a letter from Falk with the first volume of the *Musen-Almanach*. On page 15 you will find the "Wanderer," which I commend to Lotte's heart. It was written in my garden, on one of the best days, with Lotte in my heart, and in peaceful contentedness, with all your future bliss before my mind. If you look at it properly you will find more individuality in the thing than would appear: you will recognize Lotte and me under the allegory, and what I have so many thousand times felt beside her. But, betray it to no man. On that

* The brothers Jacobi. See note †, p. 146. He refers, probably, to some reviews, in his opinion, insincere.

account it must even be sacred to you, and I always have you with me when I write anything. Now I am working at a novel,* but it goes on slowly. Also a drama for performance in order that the fellows may see that my only object is to observe rules and to represent morality and sensibility. Adieu. One more word in confidence as an author: my ideal grows daily in beauty and grandeur, and if my vivacity and my love do not desert me, there will yet be much for my loved ones, and the public too may take its share.

And now good-night, dear Lotte. Inclosed are some verses which I was going to add to a portrait of myself for Lotte: as it has not been a success, however, she has this in the meantime. So much for the present.

134.†—To Charlotte Kestner.

When of some worthy, lately dead,
Pastor or councillor, the head
His widow has on copper etch'd,
And underneath some doggrel scratch'd.
It runs:—
In head and ears ye see
A man of worth and good degree;
Ye see his features and his brow;
But not the clever brain below.
Such merits in the public weal
His nose cannot to you reveal.
So is it now, dear Lotte, too,
My likeness here I send to you.
You'll see the long nose easily,
The flowing hair, the glancing eye
The *horrid face* it well may be;
But all my love you cannot see.‡

* Probably *Werther*. See note at end of Letter 171 *below*.

† Enclosed in the preceding.

‡ Kestner (*Goethe v. Werther*, p. 184) gives a facsimile of the silhouette, which displays a very fine profile of Goethe at the age of twenty-four.

135.—To Kestner.

[October, 1773.]

Dear Max de la Roche is to be married to a respectable merchant here.* Fine! very fine.

Your Hans constantly writes to me how things go on in the "Teutsche Haus," thus I have a complete chronicle since your departure of all bruises, boils and quarrels of any importance. Is it true that Dorothy is to be married?

There is an unprecedented star in our town: we have had full twenty marriages of importance in the last six months. Our two next-door neighbours gave themselves away almost in the same week as my sister.

The watchman is blowing his horn, the bells ring, the drum sounds, and over yonder day is beginning to break.

I have lately been busy, and working at many little things, and a comedy with songs† will soon be ready; also I have laid the foundation of several important pieces which will now be studied more.

The foregoing comedy has been worked up without great outlay of mind and feeling within the horizon of our actors and our stage. And yet the people say there are passages in it which they would not act.

But I cannot help that now.

You shall have it in MS.

Has Lotte seen and talked to Chancellor Jacobi. He has noticed her particularly, I remark. Is he still there?

Falk is an excellent young man; I am glad that he is fond of me; he writes to me often. Merck and I have had a wonderful scene over a silhouette which Lavater sent me, and which very much resembles Lotte. I cannot tell you how it was. It was the evening of his arrival, and I thereby perceived that he likes Lotte well enough. For whoever knows Lotte, and does not love her dearly, him do I not love.

Adieu, my children, it is daylight!

* Namely Peter Brentano, a widower with five children.

† Probably *Erwin und Elmire*. The more important pieces referred to may be the drama of *Mahomet*, which he never carried out, and *Faust*, which he had commenced at Strasbourg.

Do you already know that Hopfner has married Madlle Thoma.

Write to me soon, and rejoice in the remembrance of me, even as I rejoice in yours.

G.

136.—To Frau von Laroche.

[12 October, 1773.]

We have heard nothing from you for so long. However, I must tell you in all haste that Schlosser has arrived, and to-morrow there will be a joyful betrothal. I rejoice in their happiness although I lose mostly thereby. They will remain here a few weeks longer, and then to their destination.* Farewell, best friend, greet your dear ones, and do not forget us.

Goethe.

137.—To Hans Buff.

I congratulate you, dear Hans, on your happy recovery, and hope that my letter may find you all well again. Give the enclosed letter to Herr Krafft of the Bremen council, who will be so good as to deliver it to Herr Kestner. Remember me to your dear father and sister Caroline. Many greetings to Meslles Lenchen, Dorothy and Annchen; and the other girls and boys must be good, and they shall have almonds and pictures when I come.

G.

Tell Lenchen she must send Lotte the pieces of the blue striped dressing jacket, which she has forgotten, to be darned, they will be found I dare say. Or rather let Lenchen give you them and send me them by post-cart; I will send them to Lotte, but nobody must write anything about it to her.

* His sister and Schlosser were to go to Emmendingen after their marriage.

138.—To Hans Buff.

I am glad, dear Hans, that you are so good and do not let the prize be taken from you. If everything in the house is straight again I hope it may continue so. Thank you for the pieces, only let nobody write to Lotte about it. Let me know as soon as possible when the carrier is going to Hanover; I have a little box, but you must caution the man well that it contains breakable goods, that it may be dealt with gently.

Good-bye, dear Hans; enjoy the fruit thoroughly, and greet Papa and all the dear creatures in the "Teutsche Haus." Adieu. G.

139. To Salzmann.

[October, 1773.]

It is long since you have heard anything from myself, but surely you must have heard from Lenz and other friends here and there. I am pushing on continually, for Plautian comedies are beginning to develope themselves. Lenz, however, must write to me. I have something on my heart for him.

If you still have the copy of Berlichingen send it to Sessenheim addressed to Mlle. —— without Christian name. Poor Friederike will find herself to some extent consoled if the faithless one is poisoned. If the copy has gone, perhaps you will get another.

I should like to hear once more how you are, what the Fire-side * is doing, etc.

My sister is to be married at Carlsruhe.†

140.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[18 October, 1773.]

We know, pretty well, dear aunt, how to interpret your silence, since we ourselves have before now been

* Probably the name of a club.

† Cornelie Goethe was married on November 1, 1773.

guilty of the same sins. Yet a sin it will ever remain, and it shall be forgiven you in consideration of future improvement. I hoped to hear about the arrival of the new little girl;* it takes its time, as I see.

The most remarkable thing I can inform you about is Schlosser's arrival. The young couple have already been asked in church; they will be married in a fortnight, and then go at once to Carlsruhe. My sister-bride salutes you. She is now quite in the midst of her packing, and I am looking forward to mortal solitude. You know what I possessed in my sister; yet what of that: a fellow of the right sort must accustom himself to everything. Just now a few excellent people from out of the wide world have come to me, particularly one, and have given me many good days. Our small circle looks rather queer. My sister makes a great gap, and I—Betty† knows what I mean. I should like just once to manage a ride with you from the Gallenthor through the Terminei as far as All-Saints. In the meanwhile my skates will make me happy for the winter.

I told you beforehand that you would have to love Jung, only that I wish you could also love people who are not like him.

Greet the dear wife a hundred times. Lotte‡ will receive my letter.

My authorship is in a windy condition. I have worked, but I have accomplished nothing. You shall receive the "*Jahrmarkt*" on condition that you do not let it go out of your hand, nor—but, I need no conditions with you. The *Göttingen Musen-Almanach* is very good this year. You will find much that is true and warm. Also a few things, which if not from me, still I have read to you.§

What you wrote about the *Mercury* seems intended to prepare me for an unfavourable verdict. ‖ It does not

* The expected addition to Jacobi's family turned out to be a boy.

† Helene Elizabeth Jacobi. See note (†), p. 148.

‡ The half-sister of the brothers Jacobi. See Letter 106.

§ As a matter of fact it contained several poems by Goethe, amongst them 'The Wanderer,' referred to *above*. Letter 116.

‖ Unfavourable notices of *Goetz* appeared in the September and December numbers.—U.

matter: I am accustomed to such things. It depends upon whether the reviewer be a honest fellow; he may praise or blame me, and what I think of him I shall tell you. As yet we have not got him. You know the winged haste of the messenger of the gods.*

A beautiful new plan has developed itself in my mind into a grand drama.† I only want first to see whether I can learn anything from the praise and blame of the public. And my successful drama, and Wieland's verdict. May this not be impending as long as a judgment in Wezlar.‡ I have won, dear aunt, won unconditionally; only surrender before you are prevented by sentence and execution. Read the passages over and over again, and congratulate yourself on your change of mind, the conversion of at least your own eyes.

Adieu, dear aunt, and let us sometimes see a visible token of your remembrance. You know that we are sensitive people.

GOETHE.

141.—To CHARLOTTE KESTNER.

[Frankfort, 31 October, 1773.]

I DO not know, dear Lotte, if there is ground for my conjecture that you will soon be wanting a dressing-gown; at any rate, I fancy you will. And as I thought over this weighty point, I said to myself: She likes white; all muslin is banished in winter, unless quilted; and then she would look too old-womanish in it, &c. Hereat the prudent goddess of fashion came to me and gave me the accompanying material, which has every quality except endurance. It is muslin, so it has all its merits; the satin stripes fit it for winter wear. Short and sharp, to the tailor with it, but let him deal very carefully with it. N. B. it is to be lined with no other colour than white; those which I have seen had white linen underneath. The piece is just enough for a dressing-gown besides pockets.

* A satirical allusion to the unpunctuality of the *Mercury*. See above to Kestner.

† He probably refers to *Mahomet*, of which, however, only fragments were written.

‡ He refers to the proceedings of the Imperial Chamber

At the same time I send the pieces of the blue and white dressing jacket left behind, and beg you in the newly arrived distinguished friend not to forget the true old one.

Adieu, dear Lotte. Greet your husband for me. Remember the old times as I do. Frankfort, 31 October, 1773, on the day that Wolfgang——

GOETHE.

142.—To JOHANNA FAHLMER.

IN order that our expedition may pass off quickly to our mutual satisfaction, here follows the comic piece,* and the pattern-scraps. For the rest, all goes well here, running to and fro, and packing.

And I am, as always, in changeable moods, and have let myself be induced to do something, for which you will heartily —— me.† In the meantime, adieu, and keep some affection for us, for you will have to come here again.

GOETHE.

Of the patterns herewith sent, one cost 17 fl., and the other 10 fl., the piece, as is marked within. But they ask to have all patterns returned as soon as possible, with those that have been selected, marked. Still another thing. Herr Andrä sends you herewith a copy of the *Töpfer*,‡ and hopes to see a civil and if possible a commendatory notice in the *Mercury*. The man has staked wife, children, and money upon it. Only in view of that, and even if the thing did not possess any real musical or other merit—one ought not to refuse him this service of love. These gentlemen do it on other occasions, will they also do it on the present one? He

* The *Jahrmarktsfest*.

† He refers to the farce, *Götter, Helden, und Wieland*, which Fräul. Fahlmer, who, with the Jacobis, was closely allied with Wieland, could hardly be expected to admire. In publishing it Goethe acted somewhat against his better judgment on Lenz's advice. Had Merck, who was then in St. Petersburgh, been consulted, he would hardly have printed it. However Wieland took it in good part.

‡ The *Potter*, an opera by Johann André, a silk-weaver of Offenbach. *Autobiog.*, bk. xvii. The opera was brought out with great success.

does his best to recommend himself, though indeed I know nothing more pitiful than an author who recommends himself. Yet this is only the man of business. For the thing will not go of its own accord, as indeed I should like to have told him before. Many greetings to the dear wife, and to Lotte. G.

The 31 October, 1773. N.B. The note has been left behind, and must now go by the post-cart.

143.—To Helena Elizabeth Jacobi.*

[Frankfort, October, 1773.]

I cannot get you the story, and have nothing but this thing, which will perhaps not interest you. In the meantime one looks at a peep-show, if one cannot have an opera. Give it to Mad. La Roche, and with all my heart farewell. However short the time for which I have seen you, for such a short time I have ever an impression, so entirely sweet, of your presence, and that you still like me a little.

Goethe.

144.—To J. G. Röderer.†

[1773.]

Well as I know, dear friend, that silence is better than much speaking, still I willingly confess to you that I have not interpreted your protracted silence altogether favourably to myself. Hr. Wunschold can tell you that your letter has surprised me. I thank you for the acquaintance of this kind person. I had no doubt that you would persevere in your eager efforts, and I relied on your heart, that *in ecclesia pressa* you continue to study the Greeks; still I have always wished to hear how and what. It would cheer me up, and I should cease to be as entirely lonely as I am here. If there were four of you here, or only three—and I should be

* See note (†), p. 148. She is the "wife" referred to in the last letter and others to Johanna Fahlmer.

† See Letter 63.

willing to stipulate for even less—it would be very different. For thus to look forth like a Deukalion over the fertile soil of the endless earth, and still to lack fellow-creatures—if in such a case the genius did not awaken children from stones and trees, one would not care for life.

In the neighbourhood I have a worthy friend, and the ἀναμείβειν of our activity preserves us both.

The plastic arts occupy me almost entirely. What I read and do, I do for their sake, and daily learn more: of how much greater importance it is in everything to lay one's hand even to the smallest, and work it out oneself, rather than to render a critical account of the most perfect mastery of another. In my *Architecture* and elsewhere I have said so with all my heart, and I know that the word will take hold upon young, warm souls, that are not yet lost in the mire of theories and literatures. I am heartily glad that you take interest in this. How often in writing have I been thinking of you all, for in my rapture I was quite in and about the minster again. Herewith I send you four copies of the biblical questions; they are not to be had here, and also one *Architecture*. And now I have been circumstantial enough respecting myself, in order to induce you and your friends to do the same. Greet them all from me.* Yours, GOETHE.

145.—To FRAU JACOBI.

[Frankfort, 3 November, 1773.]

HEREWITH I send little mother a selection of books; if not the best it is at all events the newest, and as good as I have. Put aside the sheet of the comedies, and I will send you the remainder by and bye.

Also a couple of wedding poems, and with them many greetings from us all. Is the dear little fellow well? † And what is his name? For the rest, Aunt and Lolo will have told all about us and our household, which by no

* The foregoing letter is placed here in accordance with Hirzel's arrangement, but the internal evidence points to a rather earlier date. Cf. Letters 115. 117, 118.

† See note (*), p. 155.

means admits of a description in words; it is more motley and monotonous than a Chinese one.

So now for my wager, then, dear lady! my wager! Does everything happen according to justice? I have already said half, and I promise you besides two more epigrams.

The *Potter** has been given here with great applause, but in order that no joy may be unqualified, the sale of its score will not take place.

Now good-bye for a while, and assure Aunty and Lotte that I am still as of old.

GOETHE.

146.—To FRAU JACOBI.

7 November, 1773.

I SHOULD prefer not to write to you, dearest lady, in the humor in which I am, and still I should like to tell you at once how much pleasure your letter has given me. Your voice and your person became living about me, and you must feel how dear your presence is to me. For the last hour I have been standing here and reflecting myself in your letter, and am at your bedside; but, good-night, dearest lady. If I cannot speak to you from my heart, better be silent.

16 November.

Two days ago Schl[osser] and my sister went away.†
So much for the present. Yours entirely,

GOETHE.

147.—To JOHANNA FAHLMER.

DEAR AUNT. [16 November, 1773.]

THAT my agency proceeds so slowly is the fault of the hurry-skurry, which for the last week has been buzzing around me. The day before yesterday my sister went—and I am cock of the walk. The ass has no more two pieces from *Franzlein*, and the second piece is already to be cut off from everything only semi-beautiful. I have therefore not cared to send the patterns. About the *Potter* in my next. I am, in all confusion, yours, G.

* André's *Töpfer*. See Letter 142.
† They were married on the 1st inst.

148.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[Frankfort, 23 November, 1773.]

This time, dear Aunt, about the 'Potter.' I thank you for wishing that my opinion regarding it should transpire. The piece is there for the sake of the music, testifies to the benevolent soul of the author, and is equal to the requirements of our theatre, so that both actor and spectator are able to follow him. Here and there is a good sally, and yet without music its uniformity could not be preserved. The music itself, too, is composed with much knowledge of the actual resources of our theatre. The author has endeavoured to combine a correct declamation with a light, flowing melody, and no greater art is needed to sing his little airs than is required for the favourite compositions of H. Hiller and Wolf. In order not to leave the ear empty, he has turned all his industry towards accompaniment, which he has tried to render as full-toned and harmonious as was feasible without disadvantage to the melody. To this end he has often employed wind-instruments, and sometimes used one of the latter in unison with the voice, whereby it is strengthened and improved; as is the case, for instance, in the first duet with one flute. He cannot be taxed with either copying or stealing; and we may always hope for more from him. In a few airs, the *da capo* might have been shorter, as for instance in the air: "How many a rude young rustic," p. 78. I approve of his having had the whole score engraved; if more did the same, it would please the connoisseur and the amateur. It would also be to the benefit of the foreign and private theatre. Something like this, "more or less," *Mercury* might say without degrading itself. I am blotting this with being in such a hurry. Pardon it, dear aunty. Greet the dear wife and Lotte. I am as always now sometimes tolerably, sometimes intolerable. I have had headache for some days, and have been in a very benevolent (? perhaps malevolent)

humour. Let us soon hear from you. Bolling* is returned from his journey. He would soon have visited the Bashaw at Weimar. What about our bet? Adieu, aunty; my sister has arrived safely, and will soon be settled.

GOETHE.

Address: To Mamsell Mamsell Fahlmer, at H. Hofkammerrath Jakobi's, Franck-Cöln, in Düsseldorf.

149.—To JOHANNA FAHLMER.

[29 November, 1773.]

IF we only agree beforehand that each go his way, without wishing to take along the other, all will be well. We shall at all events meet again, although we may deviate here and there! Only perhaps we were both too much accustomed to *walking hand in hand*, and who is not, so etc. etc. etc.

My sister plays her part well. Her migration, settling, and all, she manages well. They still remember the insult and reproaches between Bornheim and Frankfort.

Now she is wading along to her heart's content, and begs to salute you all. When the spirit of invention sweeps over me, I intend to ask him for some such article *à l'imitation*, otherwise he will not like to do it. But, seriously, if it is not a joke, I am glad that the Moral Wordshop† has again sold itself. I should like to propose a *pot-pourri*, or any such as you like, with moral emblems and proverbs.

I thank you for the ballad, and beg for some more.‡

On the other hand, all those which I brought from Alsace are at your service.

* J. C. Bolling was a merchant and a friend of the Jacobi family. He managed the commercial affairs of the *Deutsche Merkur*. The Bashaw is Wieland.

† Supposed by Urlichs to refer to Wieland, who edited the *German Mercury*.

‡ This refers to popular ballads (Volkslieder), of which Goethe was making a collection. Cf. letter to Herder, No. 48.

I will inquire about the little violin, and tell you as soon as possible. In the packet there is a notice from the paper here about the *Mercury*, in which they lick the dust from Wiel[and's] feet. I have done my best to set Deinet* against Wieland. I have represented to him, how it was a shame that the *Mercury* should have said: "The *Frfter. Zeitung disappeared with the end of* 72," while in reality it still exists "en toutes lettres." Nevertheless, I had to admire from my soul the politeness and pious lamb-like friendliness of page 773 *sqq.* Adieu, dear Aunt; I thank you in André's soul.†

Also for the communication of the *opinions* about me. They are always interesting, however little influence they may or can have *over* and within me. Addio.

GOETHE.

150.—To Frau Jacobi.

Excuse my rubbish, dearest lady. A shake of the hand is always better than any compliment. Therefore it always comes from the heart when I write, and if I had first to reflect, to study, or to correct:—*what?* you would for all eternity receive no letter. By the post-cart you will at all events have one, and therein the following sheets of the 'Väterchen' (little father), the father about which, to the comfort of Jung's Christian soul, you can say, that it is not mine. I have not done it, Mama, but a youth, whom I love as my soul, and who is an excellent youth. But why judge according to works! It is indeed written: By their fruits ye shall know them. But are these our *fruits*, with which we besmear the paper, written or printed? Thus much, dear lady, because I wished you to remain well-disposed to the author of the 'Väterchen,' and at the same time to know that it is not I. You have the honest Jung again with you; perhaps his Kristelchen has already wanted him back again, and I hope that your last boy is well and lively, since you write

* Editor of the *Frankfurter Gelehrt. Anzeigen* after Schlosser's retirement.

† See Letter 142, recommending André's opera for favourable notice. It had no effect, for an unfavourable review appeared in the December number of the *D. Merkur.*

nothing about him. I cannot picture you to myself without the boy. And then I should not like, dear lady, to complain of my present circumstances, that, if I had not lately become more biting again, I should never get on.

I have no time at all to collect my wits, and have besides begun a piece of work, *stricte* for you, and for all dear souls like you, not for their nourishment, but still I hope for their enjoyment.

By Shrove-Tuesday it might arrive, if the stars are not altogether too adverse. Greet Lottchen* from me. About my sister, who greets you, you will read in aunty's letter; and the Gerocks hold you in hearty affection, but are in a poor way. Käthchen is ill; Antoinette has more desires than can be satisfied *this time*. And I avoid her, because I have not the power to effect anything better. This is the reason that you have not yet received a portrait. Adieu.

151.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[December, 1773.]

I have found a little violin; I will have it put to rights and with a bow send it well-packed by the post-cart. Herr Friz or Herr George will receive it from me as a trifling Christmas present. I only wish that the gentleman who at present is going to try his fortune on it may learn as much as the dear creature who had it beneath her chin before him, and then he may become a virtuoso or at least learn to feel like one.

Herewith I send the little poem, upon the specified conditions. I greet heartily the dear wife and Lollo, who indeed might as well pour out her anxiety on me in a little letter.

In the country and the town
Naught one has but labours;
The little that we make our own
We fight for with our neighbours.
Round about on God's wide earth
Naught but envy, woe, and dearth.
Would that one could quit it.

* One of her daughters.

Earthly ills are void of dread
Save to the weak and ailing;
Toil will earn you daily bread,
Bed and board and dwelling
Where'er God's sun his rays does send
Thoul't find a maiden, find a friend.
Let us ever stay there.*

152.—To the Kestners.

[Early on Christmas Day, after 6 in the morning, 1773].

It is a year ago that I wrote to you at this very hour, my dear ones; how much has altered since that time.

I have not written to you for long, which means that I have been very unsettled.

I thank you, dear Lotte, that in exchange for my cobweb,† you have presented me with a letter. If I had hoped for that my present would have been selfish. I have kissed it certainly a hundred times. There are moments in which one first remarks how dearly one loves one's friends.

I cannot describe to you the joy I had in seeing Merck‡ again, he came a week sooner than I expected, and was sitting with my father in the room. I came home without knowing anything, entered, and heard his voice before I saw him. You know me Lotte.

The passage in your letter which contained a hint of a possible approach to you went through my soul. Ah, that has been my dream, ever so long since you went away. But it will probably remain a dream. My father would not indeed have anything against it if I went into foreign service, and neither love nor the hope of an appointment keeps me here, and so it seems as if I could venture a trial, once more, of the prospect over there.

But, Kestner, the talents and powers which I have, I need too much for myself. I have been hitherto

* This song was reprinted with a trifling alteration in *Erwin und Elmire*, which was written about this time. See Letter 135.

† See Letter 141.

‡ He had just returned from St. Petersburg; whither he had gone from Berlin. See Letter 112.

accustomed to act only according to my instinct, and therefore could be subject to no prince. And then until I learnt political subordination—— They are a cursed people the Frankforters, the President Moser used to say, their obstinate heads can be used for no purpose. And if even it were not so, amongst all my talents my jurisprudence is the smallest one. The little bit of theory and common sense are not sufficient. Here my law practice goes hand in hand with my knowledge; I learn every day, and make a hack-horse of myself. But in a commission of law—I have hitherto guarded myself from playing a game in which I was the most inexperienced at the table. Moreover —but I should like to know if your words were anything more than desire and fancy.

My sister is good, she is learning to live! And only in complicated critical cases do men find out what is within them. She is well, and Schlosser is the best husband, as he was the tenderest and most constant of lovers.

153.—To Hans Buff.

Here is a good friend of mine, I would gladly have come with him, dear Hans, but that could not be. If you continue to love me, I hope to live to see you again once more. Whatever you do for Herr Plitt I will accept as to myself. Take him to the Brandts, and introduce him to the sisters, whom the young man will please without my recommendation. My boys must continue to love me. I send them something from the fair. Sophie and Annel have not forgotten me I hope. Always be good. Do not buy the 'Frankfort News,' it can be of no use to you. If I find a good book for you, I will send it you. Good-bye, and don't forget to write.

Goethe.

154.—To Hans Buff.

Dear Hans, beg Annchen to pardon me for not having executed her commission, Herr Schmidt can give

no patterns, but he will send a few pieces. Now Annchen must be so good as write what colour and kind they require, and I will see to it.

One more commission: at Herr Falk's, I have 9 fl. to my credit; get them, and send me them by the post-cart.

Greet the whole household, Miss Dorothy you know well enough,—and Lenchen. And I should like to hear what Lotte writes and sends.

G.

155.—To Frau Jacobi.

1773, the last day of the year.

Round, Round, Round and here it is round again now. Take kindly to what is coming, and reckon me as belonging to your world, as I do you in mine, and so, *vice versa*, we shall remain in the old—which I am heartily fond of, provided that no one perceive that the Past has everywhere a finger in the pie. For the new year my prospects have decked themselves up in regular raree-show style. Max. La Roche is to be married from here. Her intended seems to be a man with whom one can live, and so hurrah! Again is the number of the good creatures increased that are nothing less than intellectual, as indeed you might surmise. For, between ourselves, while it is always a critical business on earth with acquaintances, friends and sweethearts, so that often, whilst one thinks that one has it by all four corners—plop! comes the devil and tears a big hole in the middle, and upsets everything. As has just lately happened to me, and vexed me very much. And so to return to my point, I am far more active than formerly in seeking where anything dear, friendly and good may be hidden; and I am in such a good humour, because I find all kinds of unlooked things, etc., that sometimes I have been on the point of falling in love. From which, however, God keep me. But, at all events, little mother shall be informed at once of any such mishaps having occurred. How beautifully I have been drawing of late I do not like to say, because I still remain in considerable arrears

And then the draughtsman who drew the Hanover Lotte* is one who understands the matter. It is like from head to foot;† only that I would not have been able to put it down so much in detail, the reason being that I was so enamoured with the whole, and God has willed that a lover shall be a bad observer.

As to the review I am as innocent as a babe, and this time you have seen ghosts because you looked for them. I sent it, in point of fact, that you might laugh at me. I had written to aunt how I had bullied Deinet,‡ and, really, I hoped that he would stultify himself, and lo! there he is as civil as a little dog. Upon my word, there is on my part no milk and gall-drops in it.

May God requite Captain Dobel for helping you to get through this darkness and time of affliction. Yet he has his reward to come hereafter. We abide by Shrove-Tuesday whatever comes to pass. And so adieu. Does the little one thrive? Alas, dear lady, in the last three-quarters of a year I have married three or four couples, and as yet not one gives any happy promise.

GOETHE.

Many greetings to the aunt. I was going to write to her, but I cannot form any idea of her, dull, heavy, lazy and snuffling with cold as she is, in Düsseldorf, so my dramatic genius leaves me aground.

156.—To HANS BUFF.

I SEND you herewith, dear Hans, a praemium virtutis et diligentiae for the new year. And also a new *Heller* § that you may see what sort of people we Frankforters are. Greet all the dear people for me, and hold me dear.‖

G.

* Charlotte Kestner.

† This probably refers to a description of Charlotte Kestner by Jacobi referred to in Letter 165, *below*, q. v.

‡ See p. 163, *above*.

§ A small copper coin.

‖ Four more short notes to Hans Buff, with commissions or small presents, about this date, are omitted.

157.—To Heinrich Christian Boie,*

Frankfort, 8th January, 1774.

With the return of friend Merck from Petersburg I have myself undertaken the publication of Göz, and I beg you to help me on with it a little, for I am adapted for nothing less than for a business-man. You have received 150 copies in two lots; Herr Dietrich has sold them, as he himself writes me, and thus it seems fair that I should receive an equivalent for them. If it is not practicable to get the whole or a part in cash, be so good at least as to procure me paper; for that purpose I beg you for a catalogue of Dietrich's publications and for an explanation from him how he will have it done. I sometimes laugh to think how well the thing took, how quickly it was sold and printed, whilst I have not yet had back the costs of printing.

For your collection I have nothing but a few epigrams from a friend. Farewell.

Goethe.

158.—To Frau von Laroche.†

[Frankfort, (?) Jan. 1774.]

If you knew what passed within me before I avoided the house, you would not think of enticing me back again, dear Mama. In those terrible moments I suffered for all the future; I am quiet, and let me have peace. 'That I should not like to see you there,' 'What would people say,' &c., all that I have overcome. And God preserve him from the only case in which I would cross the threshold.

* Born at Meldorp in 1744. His life and poems were published in 1868, by Prof. Karl Weinhold of Halle. In 1773 he was at Göttingen, where, with Gotter he founded the *Musen-almanach*, to which Goethe occasionally contributed. He and several other young writers, Voss, Holty, Hahn, &c., formed the nucleus of the so-called *Sturm und Drang*, or young German party, in the literature of this period.

† Evidently written during a visit of Frau von Laroche to Frankfort, probably soon after the marriage of Maximiliane, which took place at Ehrenbreitstein on January 9th.

Here, dear Mama, are prints after my designs. To-morrow my mother will fetch you and the little ones. You will not repent it.

G.

159.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? Jan. 1774.]

I have an opportunity of letting you see a grand sight, if you will grant me to-morrow afternoon; I beg one syllable in answer; this evening I shall see you at the concert. However, if you could, I should like to know at once, and then to-morrow, after dessert at one o'clock, the carriage shall be waiting at your door. My mother will be there, and we will take the little fellows with us.

Greet dear Max.

G.

160.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[End of January, 1774.]

To-day there was an ice-high-day! It was forced to give, it cracked and bent, and leaked, and finally broke, and the fine gentlemen paddled out like swine.

Here is a ballad.*

And greeting to Betsy, my sweetheart, and the enclosed to Lolo,

"It is well for me
that all are well, Amen,"

and so on, &c., &c.

Yesterday we ate venison pasty and savoury-jelly, and drank a great deal of wine, and sat between houris till one o'clock at night, and fed ourselves with spoons. From Herr Reuss, for the second time burgomeister, where I had announced the New Year in scarlet and gold—whither? "Coachman, to the Rhine." I ascend the steps, where the bell-pull still hangs in the corner. I ring!—little Kate† comes! "Do you still know me?" "Oh, my goodness!"

* Urlichs (p. 41) prints a ballad which he supposes to be the one referred to.

† The Jacobis' servant. This make-believe visit was of course to their house at Düsseldorf.

The lattice was opened, I seize her familiarly by the head and pull off her hood. And inside there is the H. G. Scho . . .* Good! I present myself. Mama is pouring out coffee, and does not see me at her very elbow until I stand before her—and then—

161.—To Frau Jacobi.

[February, 1774.]

I am very well, dear lady, and thank you for your double and threefold letter. For the last ten days there has been great revelling here, and now we are as content and happy as one can be. *We*, I say, for since the 15th of January, no branch of my existence has been solitary. And Fate, with which I have so often wrangled, is now courteously entitled beautiful, wise Fate, for certainly that is the first gift, since she took my sister from me, that has the appearance of an equivalent. Max is ever the same angel, who with the simplest and most precious qualities draws all hearts to her; and the feeling I have for her, in which her husband will find a cause for jealousy, now makes the happiness of my life. Brentano is a worthy man, an open strong character, with much acuteness of mind, and as well qualified as possible for his business. His children are merry, simple and good. Now add the dear Dumeix† and a lady friend and you have the whole group of us. Our Mama la Roche left us on the last day of January, and my tranquil friendship has again seen itself rewarded. I feel that I am far more to her, and she far more to me, than two years ago, nay, than six months ago. So true is it that true unions need time, like trees, and roots to grow, to form blossoms and to bring forth fruit. If you knew, dear lady, with what heart and with what words we have often spoken of you, you would have longed yourself over to us, and would not have been deprived of a seat at our table. Thanks for the interest in André's fate. He is bitter, but does not let me notice any

* Probably a joking allusion to Fritz Jacobi, to whom Goethe apparently was now beginning to be reconciled.

† Otherwise Dumeitz, Dean of the collegiate foundation St. Leonard's in Frankfort.

thing; it seems he does not trust me, and thinks I have never sent you anything. Enough, we have done our part. What vexes him most is that his production* has been classed amongst imitations. Tirelireli! What is that to an author?

A mighty cold pierces through the window to my heart, to my thousand-fold delight. A large meadow out there is flooded and frozen over. About ten days ago our ladies drove over to look on at our pantomimic dance.† Then we excelled ourselves. Immediately afterwards it thawed, and now again frost. Halleluja! Amen!

My thanks and greeting to Lotte and the Aunt.

162.—To Frau Jacobi.

The violin will soon come,‡ little Mama, like an actress in a rehearsal, in flannel bodice, with motley ribbons in her cap. Think, whenever it occurs to you to write me a letter, that it is a good spirit, at least my good spirit, and feel how welcome your letters are to me, for I am so lonely. But yet certainly happier than formerly, and surrounded by hearty, loving creatures.

You have now done for one copy of the 'Little Father.'§ Still, I send you the following sheets. But to burn them, I think, was not economical.

Your boys are dear to me, because they are your boys, and the last one is dearest to me. Whether they believe in Christ, or Göz or Hamlet, it is all the same, only let them believe in something. He who believes in nothing despairs of himself. Has nobody seen my Hanoverian Lotte?‖ Nobody sees her with my eyes, but other people also have eyes, &c.

The Pot pourri, in a strict sense, is a very insignificant piece of furniture; it makes a suspicion of fragrance in a room, just as many people have a shadow of taste. But

* See above, Letter 142.

† i.e. the skating; comp. *Autobiog.*, bk. xvi. (trans., vol. ii., p. 70).

‡ Intended for one of her sons. See Letter 151.

§ The book referred to above, Letter 150.

‖ i.e. Charlotte Buff, with whom Jacobi's sister Lotte, frequently mentioned, must not be confounded.

the "Pot," which is called by custom "pourri," and which is even properly so called, deserves far rather to be made emblematically and apothegmatically useful to the soul also. I have a few good ideas thereupon; but the whole!—an epic is not rhymed in a day.

I have omitted the bow of the little violin; it was only in the way, and you can get one anywhere.

163.—To Gottfried August Bürger.*

Frankfort, February 12, 1774.

I send you the second edition of my Göz. I have been wishing for a long time to write to you, and the few hours which I have been spending with your friend Destorp † have decided me to do so.

I rather pride myself that I am the one to break down the paper partition wall between us. Our voices have often met, and our hearts also. Is not life short and barren enough? Should not they whose ways lie together take hold of each other?

Whenever you are working at anything, send it to me. I will do the same. That gives one courage. You show it only to the friend of your heart, which I will also do. And I promise never to copy anything.

Destorp has been with me on the ice; my heart has gone out over the kind soul. Farewell.

Goethe.

164.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[End of February, 1774.]

Now what the devil does this mean, aunty? According to Lotte, you are coming here at the end of March, and yet not to write to the Majordomo, no orders for the upholsterer, steward, &c! Perhaps you rely upon yourself in that you have the Iris‡ for a douceur, and think that now everything ought to go swimmingly; *Nani*. A pretty chambermaid always has so many opportunities of her own

* The well-known author of *Leonore*. He was one year older than Goethe.

† Raths-secretär Tedorpf of Lübeck.

‡ The *Iris* began to appear in the course of this year.

that, &c. Now, if you were quite well-behaved, you would send me a beautiful evenly written epistle, wherein your strange up-gushing longings after the holy church steeple, the acacia tree and the fishing ground would be painted with poetical colours for the mental food of those natures that are rather glad to reflect themselves in others . . . .

So then this is just what lay at my heart, and so no more for this time than a warm greeting to the dear wife, and also a kind of somersault of friendship to Lotte, and finally the true monogrammatic signature of your devoted servant.*

165.—To Kestner.

[March, 1774.]

To have a letter of the first days of Christmas answered only on the 13th of February is not fair. For the future, Kestner, send me your letters by post. And write oftener: otherwise I shall address myself to Lotte, that she may write to me.

Max La Roche is here, married, which makes life still tolerable, if anything can be made tolerable in it indeed. How often I am with you, that is to say in past times, a document which you will perhaps receive soon will show. And take care to write oftener, if it is only household details. You know that I am interested in them to the utmost.

Jacobi has done Lotte justice so far. He has given a very favourable description of her; and as it was reported to me, I really did not know that all that was in her, for I have always loved her much too dearly to observe her so closely. The Iris is a childish undertaking, and must be forgiven him because he hopes to make money by it. In point of fact the Jackals are undermining the *Mercury* since they have fallen out with Wieland.

What the fellows think of me is all one to me. Formerly they abused me as a puppy, and now they must feel that one can be an honest fellow without exactly being able to

* In the original the letter is finished up with two pen-and-ink sketches of a church, buildings and trees, on a river-bank, presumably meant to represent Frankfort. Goethe was at this time giving his attention to drawing. See fac-simile, Urlichs, pp. 50, 51.

tolerate them. It suits Lotte's face well to be in the list of patronesses.

I cannot speak of my wishes and hopes to come to you. My case is like yours, and therefore we will meantime let things rest as they are.

It is a pity, however, that you did not see Herder more nearly. Was he alone then? or was his wife with him? I am very diligent, and my way of living is the same as ever. When I sometimes look at your old letters, I am astonished that I am still the same after so many changes. And would that I might hear that of you! Therefore write to me oftener, or beg Lotte only sometimes to write me a little word when she has heart for it. She might very well do that. Greet Mme. Pestel for me; she must be indeed a good woman.

The Kunckel has given the magistrate great annoyance. She was in Strasbourg. The magistrate there would not give her up, and when the Elector applied to the King she thereupon went to Switzerland. This is the latest, and, up to the present, secret news.

It is no wonder that we are very imperial, for we are the Emperor's. Adieu. Let me hear something of you soon. I am, as of old, for ever and ever. Amen.

166.—To Charlotte Kestner.

Dear Lotte,

It occurs to me this moment that I have long had a letter from you which I have not answered. That has caused you to be with me *in, cum, et sub* all this time, more perhaps than ever (let your gracious lord explain this to you). I will have it printed for you very soon. It will be good, my best one. For I am not happy when I think of you.

I am ever the same as of old, and your silhouette is still pinned up in my room, and I borrow pins from it as before. That I am a fool you will not doubt, and I am ashamed to say more. For if you do not feel that I love you, why do I love you?—

Goethe.

167.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[March, 1774.]

I must inform you, good Aunt, that a certain shameful and mischievous article, "Gods, Heroes, and Wieland," has a short time ago been made known by open publication. I wished to be the first to inform you of it, so that, in case you might wish to break with the author, you could do it *de bonne grâce*, and, without further grumbling and snapping, might give him a kick from behind and say, "Go and cheat the devil: I'll have nothing more to do with you."

For the rest, life jogs on here, and my drawing is the best thing I have. Tell the little Mama that the promised carnival scrap* shall not be left out. I have been industrious, but there is nothing yet producible, and a little earlier or later is of no matter in the world, where the "nothing at all" has so often to be pocketed. Adieu. Is it true that you will bring Lotte with you again? I sometimes wish to chat with her. You know very well how it is when I begin to talk prophetic nonsense. Adieu. If you are willing to have me as I am, then I am ever the same as of old.

168.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? March, 1774.]

Your Letters returned with hearty thanks. You know that material of this kind is made use of by me. Here also are the other things; perhaps you are surprised to see the farce† printed, and so—like that mill-stone which fell from Heaven—Farewell. I have not seen your dear ones for some time. I had spoilt my heart.

No, dear Mama, you have my hand upon it I will be good.

G.

The other copy of Wieland is for Trosso.‡

* Goethe's *Pater Brey*, which appeared in a publication called *Puppenspiel*.

† *Götter, Helden, und Wieland*. He had sent the farce in MS. to Lenz, who had had it printed without Goethe's knowledge, at Kehl, near Strasburg.

‡ Probably *Bauinspecktor* Trosson, v. Geiger's *Goeth Jahrbuch*.

169.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? April, 1774.]

I do not understand mankind, I am so often forced still to wonder at them, and thereby I detect that I am young. Formerly, when I heard of a great mind, my imagination gave to the man strength, noble conception, and other appurtenances; and now, as I learn to know the gentlemen, they are no better than a narrow-minded girl whose soul gushes out everywhere, and whose vanity is wounded with a puff of wind. I thought Wieland would not behave himself so foolishly, for what is there in the whole affair? I have burnt the little summer-house of his paper reputation, devastated his little *Desert-parterre* of wax: is he beside himself about this? How will he rage against fate which with unprecedented impertinence lays in ashes the Seshinian palace, with so many works of art and treasures, the work of so many hundred human souls, in the space of four-and-twenty hours? I was obliged to send my 'Werther' * hastily to be printed, and I did not think that you were in a disposition to follow the imagination and whims of my sentiment.

My sister is at present enduring the inconveniences of good hope; indeed I have had no letter from her for two months.†

I have seen dear Max seldom, but when she meets me it is always like a vision from Heaven.

My Mother greets you heartily. When will you come and again convince yourself that you have perhaps better sons and friends, but none truer than

Your Goethe.

170.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? April, 1774.]

Here, Mama, is what I promised. Is it right? By the post-cart I will send some more, with gilt edges,

* *Werther* was published at the Leipsic Fair, in October: this must have been written a few months before.

† Cornelie Schlosser's elder daughter was born on Oct. 28.

also the dear girl's letters,* and an excellent girl she is, also journals from H. Deinet. Will you, then, write and let me know what I owe you for the tea? What you have spent on my account? Then I will give it, with those two Carolines, to Dumeix, or to whom you wish. With the Anecht (?) Sill (?), I will wait then, but not long. Has Hohenf.† a Clavigo?

I should like very much to see Groschl.,‡ if it can be brought about with tolerably good grace.

D'abord que Wieland est curieux de savoir ce que je ferois de lui, si le hasard me l'amenoit—il est perdu—vous m'entendez bien.§

As soon as a Werther comes he shall be with you; herewith, too, I send back the testament which is not of Christ.

171.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? April, 1774.]

I have read the passages which concern me in the coming *Mercury*. He treats the matter like a good fellow, who sits firmly in his saddle.‖ I have never had anything against him, and now I forgive him even his blasphemies against my gods!

At Singlingen¶ on the golden wedding, where, ah! I danced out the birthday of your dear Max, I thought of you a good deal. O Mama! there were many lights then, and the Schweizers' Wilhelmine seized my arm and asked, "Why do they light so many candles?" That was a question to shame the whole starry vault of heaven, not to speak of an illumination. I have been looking out for you, have given my arm to your Max for a few moments.

* Probably a reference to Frau v. Laroche's "Rosalie's Letters," see above, Letter 131.

† See note (‡), p. 146, *above*.

‡ Herr v. Groschlag, the ambassador from Mainz at Frankfort.

§ "Since Wieland is curious to know what I should do with him if chance brought him to me—he is lost—you understand me."

‖ Wieland's review of the farce against himself, which he treated with good-humour.

¶ Sindlingen on the Maine below Höchst, where the Frankfort family Alessina-Schweizer had an estate.

Even if there is nothing at your heart on which it can open itself, yet let me have a word from the heart. You will see what impetus you give my wheel, if you read my 'Werther.' I began it the day after you went away, and kept at it.*

172.—To Lavater and Pfenninger.‡

26 April, 1774.

Brother, why do you torment me because of my "amusements?" I wish I had a higher idea of myself and my destiny, then I should neither call my business "amusements," nor amuse myself instead of transacting business. Thus you have attained your end.

To Pfenninger.

Thank you, dear brother, for your warmth about your brother's salvation. Believe me there will come a time when we shall understand each other. Dear friend, you speak to me as to an unbeliever, who wants to understand, who will have proofs, who has not learnt by experience. And of all this just the contrary is in my heart.‡ Am I not more resigned in understanding and proving than you? Have I not just the [same] experience as you? Perhaps I am a fool that I do not do you the favour of expressing myself in your words, and that I do not once for all prove to you, by a simple experimental psychology of my inner being, that I am a man, and therefore cannot feel otherwise than other men; that all that which seems like contradiction between us is only

* You will find much explanation in the MS. which I am soon sending you.

† This gives an approximate date for the composition of *Werther*. Fr von Laroche was in Frankfort in January 1774. See Letters 158, 159, 161. But in Letter 133 (p. 151) Goethe tells Kestner that he is "working at a novel but it goes on slowly," so that it seems reasonable, on this, and other grounds, to assign its *commencement* to August 1773.

‡ Heinrich Pfenninger, painter and engraver, was born at Zurich 1749. He engraved some of the plates in Lavater's *Physiognomy*.

strife of words, which arises from this, that I feel things under different combinations, and therefore, whilst expressing their relativity, must call them differently.

Which has been, and will remain everlastingly the source of all controversies.

And you will for ever burden me with evidences! To what purpose? Do I want evidence that I am? Evidence that I feel? Only those evidences do I adore as precious and dear which show me how thousands, or one, before me, have felt just the same; that encourages and strengthens me.

And so the word of man is to me the word of God, whether gathered by pastor or prostitute, enrolled in the canon or scattered as fragments abroad, and with inmost soul I fall as a brother on the neck of Moses! Prophet! Evangelist! Apostle! Spinoza or Machiavelli. But to each one I must say, Dear friend, it is with you as it is with me. In details thou feelest thyself strong and grand; the perfect whole would go into your head as little as into mine.

To Lavater.

Your brother-in-law* brings you nothing, but I will have a MS. sent to you. For there is some time yet before printing. You will take great interest in the sorrows of the beloved youth whom I am depicting.† We were near to one another for six years without becoming intimate,‡ and now I have lent my emotions to his history, and it makes a wonderful whole.

Herewith I send you a profile.§ The fellow (they say) was a pilot, has gone through much in slavery at Tunis, and now goes about the world to excite sympathy. I have drawn him from life. This is however only a hasty copy of it, the original expresses better the stubbornness in misfortunes and the suppression of a strong manhood. You

* Steiner, mentioned below, who was a bookseller.

† Lavater, in fact, expressed a very high opinion of *Werther*. See Düntzer, p. 224.

‡ He refers, of course, to Jerusalem. See *above*, p. 103.

§ Lavater was in the habit of obtaining portraits of striking faces from his friends for his work on Physiognomy

must have it too. The height of the forehead is exaggerated, or rather, he sat at the time more for profile, that is why it is so strongly rounded. Adieu. Brother, I am not weary, so long as I am on the earth I at least surely conquer daily my stride of land! Steiner has discovered that my portrait, which you have,* is not I. He is a very dear fellow.

173.—To ———.

Frankfort, 6 May, 1774.

You are not the only one who complains about my laconic notes, and yet methinks a powerful text is more welcome than a made up sermon; to me at least it is.

The second edition of the Berlichingen is quite unaltered. It is my trial piece, and must remain as it is. If ever I make another German drama, which I very much doubt, true souls will then feel how much I have advanced. Otherwise I am very busy, not to say diligent, advocating briskly, and yet at the same time I compose many little bits of work of good spirit and feeling. At present nothing is ready for the press. Perhaps there will be shortly, when I will inform you. Pay attention to a comedy which will come out at the Easter Fair: 'The Tutor; or, the Advantages of Private Education.' You hear by the title that it is not by me.† It will amuse you.

I enclose something for you to look at: don't tell any body where you got it. *In mysterio voluptas.* I suppose, too, you have not yet seen the 'Biblical Questions.' If it interests you I can sometimes send you something, the fellows in my circle are always having funny ideas. If you see Lessing, tell him that I should have reckoned on him, and I have not been accustomed to be deceived in my men. Greet Behrisch ‡ from me, and from Horn, too. I know the lean devil will be glad to see, so unexpectedly, something from his former Jonathan. Perhaps something will come out by me at the Easter Fair, I do not know yet whether

* Some one sent Lavater, in jest, a portrait of Dr. Bahrdt, of Giessen, as that of Goethe, whom he had not yet seen, but he was not deceived by it. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xiv. (tr. ii. 8.)

† It was apparently by Lenz. See Letter 181, and cf. Letter 97.

‡ His Leipsic friend. See p. xxxviii.

it will find a publisher; it is rather mad. If it comes out you shall know it.

Adieu, and write to me once more before you leave this world.

GOETHE.

174.—To KESTNER.

[May 1774.]

ANOTHER care is off my shoulders. Kiss the boy for me, and the immortal Lotte. Tell her I cannot picture her to myself as a new mother. It is impossible. I see her still as I left her (therefore neither do I know you as husband, nor in any other relation than the old one, and therefore, in respect to a certain event, I have worked up and developed unwonted passions, at which I warn you not to take offence). I beg you to leave the enclosed extravaganza until a further period, time will explain it. Love me, as I love you, and the world will have no more perfect friends.

G.

My horrid stuff against Wieland makes more noise than I thought. He behaves himself well under it, as I hear, and so I am in the wrong.

175.—To KESTNER.

[11 May, 1774.]

IT surprised me, I did not expect that. I had hoped it, but as your letter said nothing of it, I made up my mind that the firstborn must belong to the family. But now—I hope that Lotte—for the boy is baptised whilst I am writing on the 11th May—that Lotte may have vehemently broken through all deliberation, and said: *His* name is Wolfgang, and the boy shall be called so too! You seem to incline to it, and I wish that he should bear that name because it is mine. If you have given him the *other*, I shall persevere in giving the name of Wolfgang to the next, if even you take several other godfathers—and I—well I should like to stand for all your

children, for they are all as dear to me as you are. Write immediately what has been done. I have foolish forebodings about it, which I do not say, but time will bring it about. Adieu you people whom I love so much (that I am even obliged to lend and adapt the fulness of my love to the dreaming representation of our friend's ill-fate*). The parenthesis remains sealed till something further.

G.

176.†—To Lavater.

[From Frl. von Klettenberg and Goethe.]

Frankfort, 20 May, 1774.

He! He who needs no other name, once assured me in a blessed hour that He was ever willing to give me much more than I could imagine, He has hitherto fulfilled His promise beyond expression.

The brotherly relationship and acquaintance with Lavater is one of these gifts, and one still greater, which cannot fail to come, will be the nameless joy of hearing one day from this brother's mouth the declaration—not because you say it, but because I feel it—I believe that God is in Christ.

He goeth forth with Lavater and with Goethe—I know Him by His gait, but their eyes are stopped that they recognise Him not. But—a something—a gentle impulse—an emotion which surpasses all other emotions, however vividly these two can otherwise feel—makes it impossible for them to separate themselves from the Unknown One.

If He sometimes withdraws Himself, or rather, you withdraw yourselves from Him, immediately call Him back longingly, call Him in the bye-ways which are not quite the most beautiful; He will come. He is not too tender to break through the hedges.

To see you here, dear brother, will be exactly one of those gifts of His surpassing expectation. But punish-

* Evidently an allusion to Jerusalem's death and *Werther*.

† The first portion of this letter gives a good idea of the mystic and sentimental piety which characterised the Fräul. von Klettenberg. Comp. *Autobiog.*, bk. xiv.

ment, plague, and sorrow, would every tender friendly relationship be for me, were not the certainty bound up with it that it would last for ever. Yes, we shall behold Him, and ourselves with Him, eternally renewed, and then live and love much more vividly than now.

Goethe is superintending the silhouette portrait—three times I have been painted, three times drawn—and my likeness has never been caught. I shall gladly see, this summer, please God, what you will say of the silhouette on comparison with the original. Many hearty thanks for the printed pamphlet. May He, whose blood Golgotha drank, bless you with His best blessing. The ever new tender impression is in my heart, that He was man, died as man, is still man, and I shall be as certain of what and where He is, as He was of what and where I am.

CORDATA.

[In Goethe's handwriting on the same sheet.

HERE is the picture which I have made, and which is like her, as one sister to another. It is the family, herself it is not.

In the shadow likeness this heavenly soul is still less indicated. When you come, she will be more to you than I, although she is as much to me as to you; I am, however, in my fanatical unbelief the *I*, and, such as I am, your brother.

Hercules chatter is really not *my* feeling. One has only to pluck the Jacks by the wig, and say things such as you say, and no one cares to have a word.

177.—To FRIEDRICH THEOPHILUS KLOPSTOCK.*

Frankfort, 28th May, 1774.

SCHÖNBORN, in a letter from Algiers, which I received yesterday, writes to me. "Klopstock is going to

* Klopstock was born 2 July, 1724, and was now therefore nearly fifty years of age. He published his *Messiah* at the age of twenty-three. Respecting Goethe's early admiration for him, see *Autobiog.*, bk. ii.

beg you, through Boie, for some of your works." And why should I not write to Klopstock, and send to himself whatever it may be, and whatever he can take an interest in! May I not speak to those living, to whose graves I should make a pilgrimage. Here you have a piece* which will, indeed, never be printed, but which I beg you to send me back. As soon as a few things of mine, which are lying ready, are printed, I will send you them, or at least tell you, and wish that you may feel with what true emotion my soul hangs on you.

GOETHE.

178.—To Frau von Laroche.†

[Darmstadt (?), June, 1774.]

I was just going to write to you, dear Mama, and to promise, conditionally, to fetch you, when I received a letter from Lavater, who is coming, and having already long promised him to go to him, I must therefore do it—and if it so happens (provided that you in the meantime have made no other arrangement) that, at the time when the carriage is to leave here, I can do it with due regard to the above, I will certainly come; if I cannot I shall see you here! where you will—one only place excepted. I am ever your

GOETHE.

179.—To Frau von Laroche.

16 June, 1774.

On the 20th, which will be next Monday, Lavater will be here. I have quite a new pleasure in expecting the man. He is going to a bathing-place. I certainly would have wished that you had at least shaken hands with him, but perhaps it will still come to pass. The

* A farce called 'The judgment of the Jacobis,' Düntzer.

† This letter appears to have been written, like the next, from Darmstadt, immediately before the tour down the Lahn and Rhine, which he made in June and July, afterwards visiting the Jacobis at Pempelfort. For some part of the time he was accompanied by Lavater and the eccentric philosopher Basedow. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xiv.

world is really not so bad, it is only different from what we had represented it to ourselves. Believe me that the sacrifice that I make with regard to your Max, in not seeing her any more, is worth more than the constancy of the most fiery lover; that, in truth, it is constancy still. I will in no way reckon what it has cost me, for it is a capital from which we both draw interest. Keep your heart open to me.

Merck is again here* with bag and baggage; that is, with wife and children; as yet I have not heard from him. I have, from the fair, three masterpieces, Herder's 'Oldest Records of the Human Race,' Klopstock's 'Republic of Learning,'† and by an unnamed (Heinse) 'Laidion.'‡

GOETHE.

180.—To CHARLOTTE KESTNER.

[Darmstadt], 16 June, 1774.

I HAVE just come from Meyer's, dear Lotte, have had supper with them to-day and yesterday also. They have been at Darmstadt the whole of to-day. They are very good people I swear, they love me for I love them. We were so frank in the first quarter of an hour. O Lotte, what a child I am! How surprised I was when Mme. Meyer told me that you still think of me. Do not Kestner's letters tell me that, does not my heart tell it me, and yet it was quite new to me when the dear little woman, with the true voice of sympathy, said that you still think of me. O she felt what she was saying to me, she is a dear woman! Even yesterday night I was going to write to you, but it was not possible. I walked up and down my room, and talked to your shadow, and even now it seems hard to me to scribble this to you! Shall I then never again, never again hold your hand, Lotte? I told Mme. Meyer a great deal about you, she was with me in the wood, and promised me to talk to

* This seems to indicate that the letter was written from Darmstadt, Merck had just returned from Switzerland, where he had been to fetch his family after his journey to St. Petersburg.

† See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii.

‡ See Letter 182, p. 192, *below*.

you about me in the Ellrie.* Indeed, Lotte, I have had no such pleasure for a long time. Her husband is just one of the men who suit me; experience of life, fine arts and sciences without pedantry, and a good open heart. We got on well together. And with that, good night. They go early to-morrow, and I will send you something more. Adieu! Adieu!

And my godchild is well, and little Mama will soon be so too. I swear to you Lotte, it is a torture to my sensitive brain to think of you as little Mama, and of a boy who is yours, and who bears one of his names for my sake. I cannot get reconciled to it, I cannot picture it to myself, and so I abide by this: Lotte, dear Lotte, it shall all be as it was, and is so, and Mme. Meyer says you have not altered. And so kiss and greet Papa Kestner, he is to write nicely to me, and you must also write nicely to me, when it is not troublesome to the little mother. Here is a letter from Mme. Meyer to your sister I think. Hans sent me one to her which I faithfully delivered. I hope she will pass through here again on her return from the baths, and then I will give her a shake of the hand and a greeting for you. Adieu, dear Lotte, I shall send you soon a friend who much resembles me, and hope you will receive him well, he is called Werther, and is and was—he may explain that to you himself.

GOETHE.

181.†—To ———.

22 June, 1774.

I HAVE duly received the money sent, eight louis d'ors, and thank you for the interest which you have taken in our little business; we will not be troublesome again. For the rest we will gladly take books; also for the copies that remain in hand. Only tell us what kind of books we can ask for. But be sure to come very soon, one says more, and with more heart, in an hour than is written in years.

* A small wood near the town of Hanover.

† Evidently to the same correspondent as Letter 173.

To-morrow I expect Lavater, whom good fortune is bringing to me. You have guessed right, 'The Tutor'* is by the editor of the Plautine comedies.†

What I am having printed is: 'The Sorrows of the Young Werther,' a story, and 'Clavigo,' a tragedy. That they are nothing but titles is meanwhile enough for the demand. If you cannot get rid of the copies of 'Götz,' bring them with you, or send them by some opportunity, and a few dozen of the 'Biblical Questions.' I would rather not pay much carriage.

GOETHE.

182.‡—To CONSUL SCHÖNBORN,§ ALGIERS.

[Frankfort, 1 June–4 July, 1774.]

ON 25th May I received your letter; it gave us all a long-awaited joy. I immediately cut this new pen, in order to cram an equivalent sheet full to you, but can only begin to write to-day for the first time, 1st June.

In the night, from the 28th to 29th, a fire ‖ broke out in our Jews' quarter, which quickly and terribly gained the upper hand; I contributed my drop of water, and the most wonderful, deepest, and most manifold feelings rewarded me on the spot for my trouble. I have on this occasion again learnt to know the common people more intimately, and am again convinced that they are the best men.

I thank you heartily for going so much into the details of your journey to me, in return, you shall hear everything from our region. I have written to Klopstock, and at the same time sent him something. Do we want a medium to communicate with each other?

* See Letter 173. † See Letter 97.

‡ This letter, commenced before his journey down the Rhine, must have been partly written in the course of it.

§ A native of Schleswig, and friend of Klopstock, Gerstenberg, and Boie. He had been secretary to Graf Bernstorff, and in October, 1773, had passed through Frankfort on his way to take the post of Secretary of the Danish Consulate at Algiers. He was twelve years older than Goethe.

‖ Probably the fire referred to in the *Autobiog.*, book xvi.

I have composed a variety of new things. A story with the title: 'The Sorrows of the Young Werther,' wherein I represent a young man who, gifted with deep, pure feeling and true penetration, loses himself in enthusiastic dreams, undermines himself by speculation, until at last, distracted by the addition of unhappy passions, especially an aimless love, he puts a bullet through his head. Then I have worked at a tragedy, 'Clavigo,' a modern anecdote dramatized with all possible simplicity and truth of heart; my hero an undecided, half-great, half-little man, the pendant to Weislingen in Götz, rather Weislingen himself in the full rotundity of a chief personage; here scenes are to be found which I could only indicate in Götz in order not to weaken the chief interest. I have had a disgraceful article printed on Wieland, under the title: 'Gods, Heroes, and Wieland, a farce.' I cudgel him in a low way upon his faintheartedness in the representation of those giant forms of the vigorous world of fable. I will also try little by little to dispatch the matter, when an opportunity occurs, to Marseilles; the post cannot take much across the sea. I have imagined a few other plans for great dramas, that is to say, I have found interesting details for such in Nature and in my heart. My 'Cæsar,' which will not please you, seems also to be forming himself. I do not at all devote myself to criticism. I send little things to Claudius and Boie, of which I will add a few to this letter. I have not been out of Frankfort, but I have led such a dissipated life that I have lacked new sensations and new ideas. To-morrow about the cargo of the past Leipsic Fair. For to-day, Adieu.

8th June.

I CONTINUE: Herder has published a work, 'The Oldest Records of the Human Race.' I kept back my letter in order to send you your volume also across the sea, but I am not yet able to do it; it is a whole of such mystic, widely radiating thought, a world living and revolving in the luxuriance of intertwined leafage, that neither can a representation on a diminished scale give any impression of the giant form, nor a faithful outline of isolated parts awaken melodiously sympathetic sound in the soul. He

has descended into the depths of his experience, and therein gathered up by its roots all the high, holy strength of simple Nature, and now leads her forth in Orphic song, here gloomy and lightning-flashing, there laughing in the friendliness of morn, from the beginning onwards over the whole world, after he has exterminated the vile brood of new spirits, Deists and Atheists, Philologists, Text-improvers, Orientalists, &c., with fire and brimstone and raging flood. In especial is Michaelis slain by scorpions. But I hear the master-people already cry: he is full of sweet wine, and the guardian of the land rocks himself on his chair and says: Thou ravest!

Otherwise I have got nothing at the fair worth speaking of between us. Klopstock's 'Republic' has arrived. I have not got my copy yet.* I subscribed over and above. The pedlar Mercurius † continues bartering his philosophical moral-poetical Bijouteries, Etoffes, Dentelles, &c., and no fewer Nuremburg dolls and sugar-sweets, with women and children, and every day becomes more pedagoguishly impertinent towards his contributors, snubs them like boys in notes and epilogues. &c.

Now, too, a rational word about life. My sister is expecting a child, and sends you greeting, so does her husband. The Dean ‡ was ill a short while, now we are busy in the garden sowing, making nosegays, weeding and eating. He wants to turn apathy to some account, but I, as I see it won't do, daily practise anakastasis.§

Amongst the others with whom you are acquainted nothing remarkable has happened. Höpfner ‖ is happy in his married state.

Lavater, who loves me heartily, is coming here in a few weeks. If I can infuse in him a few drops of self-reliant feeling I shall be very glad. The good soul is so deeply pained at the fate of man, because a diseased body and a wandering mind have deprived him of collective strength, and thus robbed him of the best of joys, the abiding in oneself. It is incredible how weak he is, and how he, who still has the finest, subtlest human understanding I have

* See Letter 179. † i.e. Wieland in the *D. Merkur*.
‡ Dumeix. § This seems to mean "making new resolutions."
‖ Professor Höpfner had introduced Schönborn to Goethe.

ever met, is spoken to as it were in riddles and mysteries, if he is spoken to from the living and working heart.

10 June.

KLOPSTOCK's magnificent work has poured new life into my veins. The only poetry of all times and nations, the only laws which are possible! That is, history of feeling, as it confirms and declares itself little by little and, as with him, creates expression and speech; and the truisms of the honestest alderman out of what is noble and servile in the poet. All this written from the depths of the heart, the most individual experience, with a charming simplicity. But why do I say all this to you, who must already have read it! He, among the youths whom ill-luck has led into the army of reviewers, and who, having read the work, does not throw away his pens, abjure all criticism and fault-finding, and sit himself down simply as a quietist to the contemplation of himself—of him will nothing be made. For here the holy springs of creative feeling flow pure from the throne of Nature.

4 July.

LAVATER has been with me for five days,* and I have again learnt thereby that one ought to speak of nobody whom one has not personally seen. How entirely different does it all become. He so often says that he is weak, and I have known nobody who would have had finer forces than he. In his element he is unwearied, active, ready, decided, and a soul full of the heartiest love and innocence. I have never considered him a dreamer, and he has still less power of imagination than I supposed. But because his feelings impress upon his soul the truest relations of Nature, so much misunderstood he casts away all terminology, speaks and acts from a full heart, and seems to transplant his hearers into a strange world, whilst he leads them into the corners unknown to them of their own hearts: thus he cannot escape the reproach of a visionary. He is at the Ems-Bad, whither I accompanied him. The whole world is dissatisfied with Klopstock's 'Republic of Learning,'

* Lavater came to Frankfort 23 June. Cf. *Autobiog.*, bk. xiv.

no one understands it. I saw in fact beforehand what a pitiful figure the magnificent book would make in the hands of all the world. Lavater's 'Physiognomy' is an extensive work, with many engravings, it will contain great contributions to plastic art, and be indispensable to the historical and portrait painter.

Heinse, whom you will know through the translation of Petronius, has published a thing entitled: 'Laidion; or, the Eleusinian Mysteries.' It is written with the most flowery enthusiasm for the sensuous graces, and leaves Wieland and Jacobi far behind, although the tone and the style of its presentation through the ideal world in which it is localised coincide with theirs. At the end some stanzas are printed which exceed all that was ever painted in enamel.

The last page I will fill up with rhymes. I have from time to time written several, but nothing is quite in shape. Write to me soon about your life. My parents, sister, and friends greet you.

Farewell again and again, and hold me dear.

G.

183.—To Frau von Laroche.*

Neuwied, 19 July, 1774.

It has passed through my head more than once that it must be so; here at court † you are loved and honoured, and where is it not so? Except only where you ought to be adored? But how has it become so? I have seen the dear little one at the Dester's.‡ Good-bye, Mama, come over here! Lavater preaches here on Sundays. Remember me to Frau v. Stein.§

Goethe.

* This must have been written, after leaving Coblenz, on the journey down the Rhine.

† The Ducal Court of Nassau.

‡ D'Ester, the name of a manufacturer at Vallendar near Ehrenbreitstein.

§ The Frau vom Stein of Nassau, the mother of the celebrated Prussian statesman. She is not to be confounded with the Frau von Stein of Weimar, Goethe's later friend and correspondent, with whom she was in no way connected.

184.—To Frau von Laroche.

[Ems. 31 July.]

On Tuesday we will come to have dinner with you, to be together with real gladness, as far as the world grants it. My senses have not yet quite recovered from seeing four boys drowned yesterday night, and not one was saved.* Only at such moments does man feel how small he is, and with burning arms, and sweat, and tears effects nothing. Good-bye, Mama. Send me please a few bottles of wine, or rather I will take them with me when I come; they poison me with drink here.

G.

185.—To Frau Jacobi.

You do not expect a letter from me, at least dated

Düsseldorf, 21 July, 1774,

about 12 at mid-day, in the Prince of Orange Inn. Coming from the Gallery, which has softened the hardness of my heart, strengthened and, consequently, tempered it.

Before eight this morning I ran to your house, in the new street, at the Flinger or Flinder gate (I go into so much detail for this reason, that you may convince yourself that I am here, which I myself scarcely believe). Catherine opened the door and her eyes too, gave a jump, recognised me, and seemed to be pleased. The house was empty! The master and mistress were away, the youngest was asleep, the others in Pempelfort. I went on to Pempelfort. Lottchen, Lehnchen, Papa, Fritz, George, the little one, &c.

That it causes me sorrow not to meet you, you feel—just at this time—at this very time. What further? 'Tis in the hand of the gods.

Goethe.

* This incident is introduced in an episode of *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*, bk. ii., ch. 12.

186.—To Frau Jacobi.

[? End July, 1774.]

Your Fritz, Betty, my Fritz; * you triumph, Betty, and I had sworn never to name him to his dear ones until I could call him what I thought I could call him, and now do call him. And so welcome, a thousand times welcome. The blockaded ship's course is open, commerce flourishes, and God be gracious to grudging neighbours. How fine, how grand that you were not in D., that I did what my simple heart bade me. Not introduced, marshalled in, excused; just falling straight from Heaven before Fritz Jacobi! And he and I, and I and he! And we were already, before even a sisterly look had done the preliminaries therein, what we were to be and could be. Adieu, dear lady. Kiss the boys and girls for me.

187.—To Fritz Jacobi.

[13th August, 1774.]

I dream of the moment, dear Fritz, have your letter, and hover round you. You have felt that it was rapture to me to be the object of your love—O it is splendid that each one believes he receives more from the other than he gives! O Love, Love! The poverty of wealth!—and what strength it works in me, that in him I embrace all that is lacking to me, and give him in return what I have. Last night I was sitting on the mail-cart for a whim of Basedow's. It is again night. Believe me, we might from henceforward be dumb towards each other, and then, after a long time, meet again, and we should feel as if we had been walking hand-in-hand. We shall be at one over all which we have not discussed together. Good-night. I reel in the intoxication of frenzy, not in the billowy storm; yet is it not all the same which of them

* His first meeting with Fritz Jacobi, here referred to, marks the termination of the reserve which he had hitherto maintained towards the two brothers. In the Autobiography he attributes this to Herder's influence. See bk. xiv.

dashes us on the rock;—at any rate for those that weep. One word! Do not let my letters be seen! Do you understand! Explanation thereof shortly if needed. 13th, at Night.

14th. Evening.

I HAVE seen Aunt and am glad that the barrier is gone which, besides her other unpleasant relation, overflooded her heart with much other emotion. She can speak to me of her Fritz—to-day for the first time. Indeed! Indeed! If she had been able to do that all these years it would have been nothing. But now—and thus—her triumphant belief: They will love each other! Wife, sisters, Brother Rost,* to all greeting, to each one after his kind. I thank the girls for their little letters. They must often write to me, even though I seem dead. There is inward action, however, and thus a letter awakens dormant powers; they shall have dramas, songs, all sorts of things. Adieu my new ones—yet send Jung a 'Clavigo.'

G.

188.—To F. JACOBI.

21 August, [1774.]

AFTER a frugal supper in my room, I write to you on the table-cloth, with my glass of wine before me; after a barren afternoon, your letter, and a hundred ideas in circulation. University is university, Bohlheim, Berlin, or Paris, where the well-filled gentlemen sit, picking their teeth, and not understanding why no cook can prepare anything to please them. You have treated them roughly, and yet it † did you credit; and it is somewhat overtaxing an honest youth for the protection of the maiden who gave him all she had—for the vigorous youngster pleasure enough in the shape of fresh, warm young life. I have gone about with the story the whole week, as if it

* The name adopted by Johann J. W. Heinse (b. 1746), the poet and miscellaneous writer, who was at this time a private tutor at Halberstadt. He edited the *Iris*. See Urlichs, p. 63.

† He refers to Jacobi's *Epistel an die Academisten*.

were a vengeance on me, and that it has so befallen is excellent. As I thus resigned the honourable judgment, I set in my place a good fellow who would have written before the public elementarily, practically, prophetically, for the improvement of the heart, understanding and wit; would have given himself up to it with body and soul, and for all thanks the gentlemen would have looked to the hope —hope in the fool whom, as is well known, our Lord God Himself cannot make thankful for anything.

See, dear friend, what is the beginning and end of all writing, the reproduction of the world around me, through the inner world in which everything is held, bound up, remade, kneaded, and in peculiar form and manner again set forth; which remains eternally secret, God be thanked, and neither will I reveal it to gapers and chatterers.

I wish I could sit opposite to you, and one other besides, I have such thousands of things in my heart. Meanwhile piecemeal writing is something. The 'Memoires of Beaumarchais,'* *de cet aventurier francais*, have pleased me, have awakened in me the romantic vigour of youth, amalgamated his character, his action, with characters and actions in myself, and so my 'Clavigo' was made; that is good-luck, for I have had delight in it, and what is more, I challenge the most critical knife to separate the simply translated passages from the whole without cutting it to pieces, without causing deadly injury, I do not say only to the story, but to the structure, the vital organization of the piece! Then—why do I talk of my children, if they live, they will crawl on beneath this wide Heaven. But whoever made children for the public, without hearing *que ce cul est tiré en partie du Huron de Mr. de Voltaire.* But I pray you leave to me those men who are stamped before my eyes, and who, like Mercury and Iris, can as little bear fruit as the bear on the writings of the Gottschedian *ævum.*†

I often dwell with Jappach's spirit,‡ and I beg you to keep

* The groundwork of Goethe's *Clavigo.*

† This joke seems to refer to the Bear which was the trade-sign of the Breitkopf firm at Leipsic. See note. p. 52.

‡ Everard Jabach was a rich, well-born, and cultivated merchant of Cologne in the 17th century. His house, with its old furniture, &c. was shown to strangers, and Goethe's visit to it with the Jacobis and Heinse was an occasion of some emotion. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xiv.

it hidden from me if the good crow well-meaningly steals the holy treasure of his god *pour le mettre aux pieds de Son Altesse.* Werthes* is a very good youth, and the manner in which he makes himself at home amongst the Chinese and Sofas is so human. I could wish that Rost † would regale me with a little story, of which the matter was voluptuous without being obscene, and its expression free from Wielandish mythology, i.e. without Hippiases and Danaës, of which I am very tired, and without allusion to the old writers. If Rost would do that I should be very glad, yet tell him, if he, on the other hand, should fancy something in my poetic style and powers, he shall gladly see it from me.

You will soon receive some little things from me, as I find them; they are lying about here, there, and everywhere.

Jung is not the first who is doubtful if the piece is by me. Ever onwards. I hope some fine day to do something more, and again with as little regard to whether it may damage my fame or help it forward, &c.

The 28th is my birthday, grant it a remembrance.

I am reading once more your 'Epistle to the Academists,' and open my little letter once more to say to you: That grand indeed is independent feeling, but that the corresponding feeling of effective power is eternally true, and so thank your good spirit, and indeed our spirits, they are so much alike.

Send me Rost's letter to Werthes about Jappach's garden.

G.

189.—To Charlotte Kestner.

[27 Aug. 1774.]

I began a letter to you yesterday,‡ 26th; now here I sit in Langen, between Frankfort and Darmstadt, expecting Merck, whom I have appointed to meet here, and I have a mind to write to you. Two years ago to-day, I was sitting with you almost the whole day, we were

* An obscure poet of Wieland's school.

† See p. 195.

‡ See next letter.

slicing beans till midnight, and the 28th began festively with tea and friendly faces. O Lotte! and you assure me with all the candour and cheerfulness of your disposition, which were ever so dear to me in you, that you still love me, for look, it would be sad indeed if the course of time should gain the ascendancy over even us. I will send you as soon as possible a prayer-book, treasury of devotion, or whatever you call it, in order to strengthen you morning and evening in the good memories of friendship and love. To-morrow * certainly you will think of me. To-morrow I shall be with you, and the dear Mme. Meyer has promised to send her little spirit to fetch me away. It is a splendid morning, the first long-wished-for rain after a drought of four weeks, which refreshes me like the country, and would that I were really enjoying it in the country. The day before yesterday Gotter † was here, he goes with two sisters to Lyons to visit a sister there; he is as good as ever, and very ill, but cheerful. Our old life was recapitulated, he heartily greeted your portrait, I chatted with him about all sorts of things, &c., and so he went away again. I am well off in this, that when my friends have journeyed halfway, they must come to me and pay toll in passing.

190.—To Charlotte Kestner.

[26 and 31 August, 1774.]

Who has this moment gone out of my room? Lotte, dear Lotte, you can't guess. You will guess a succession of known and unknown people sooner than Frau Katrine Lisbet, my old stocking-washer at Wetzlar, the gossip whom you know, who loves you, like everybody who has been about you all your life; she can no longer support herself in Wetzlar, and my mother hopes to find employment for her. I brought her up here with me to my room, she saw your silhouette and cried: "Ah, the dear-heart, Lottchen!" with all her toothlessness full of

* The 28th August was Kestner's birthday as well as Goethe's. See *above*, p. 117.

genuine expression. In sheer delight she kissed my coat and hand as a welcome, and told me how naughty you were, and how you were a good child afterwards, and did not tell tales, how she had been beaten on your account, because she took you to Lieut. Meyer's, who was in love with your mother, and wanted to see you and make you a present, which, however, she did not allow, &c., &c., everything, everything. You can fancy how precious the woman was to me, and that I shall look after her. If the bones of the saints and lifeless rags which have touched the bodies of saints deserve adoration and keeping and care, why not the human creature who used to touch you, who carried you in her arms as a child, who led you by the hand, that creature whom, perhaps, you have often begged for things? You, Lotte, begged—and that creature shall beg of me! Angels from Heaven! Dear Lotte, one thing more. This made me laugh. How you have often vexed her with your fisticuffs, such as you make even now. She imitated you, and it was as if your spirit hovered over me; and about Caroline, Lenchen and all, what I have seen and have not seen, and the end of the end was still Lotte, and Lotte, and Lotte, and Lotte and Lotte, and without Lotte, naught and want, and sorrow and death. Adieu, Lotte, not another word to-day, 26 Aug.

31 Aug.

Here belongs, my dear, the enclosed leaflet, which I wrote in Langen last Saturday before Merck came. We spent a pleasant day; the Sunday was unfortunately very hot. But in the night I dreamt of you; how I had come again to you, and you had given me a hearty kiss. Ever since I have been away from you, neither waking nor dreaming have I seen you so distinctly before me. Of the enclosed silhouettes one is for you, one for the Meyers, one for Zimmermann. Kestner ought to write to me again. Adieu, Lotte; I thank you that you will perhaps read what I am writing and having printed, yet I love you, too. Kiss the boy for me, and if I can come, without much talking and writing, I shall stand again before you, as I once vanished from before you, therefore you are not to be frightened, nor to call me "a horrid face."

Greet the Meyers. I should like to see you with the boy on your arm. Adieu. Adieu.*

191.—To Hans Buff.

31 Aug. 1774.†

You have lost a dear brother, and I one of my dear boys. Be doubly and trebly good, that Papa and I may be comforted by you for this loss. Greet all for me. Write oftener to me what passes. Do you not believe then that all little details about you interest me? I have, indeed, been gone a long time, but am ever with you. Adieu; forward the letter to Lotte for me as soon as possible.

G.

192.—To Fritz Jacobi.

31 Aug.

I am very glad to see you out in the open world, partly on account of the present enjoyment of renovated body and mind, partly in hope of the favourable omen that you have bravely torn yourself away from the paper castle of speculation and literary autocracy. For that robs a man of all joy in himself. For he is led about by one and the other, here in a garden-plot, there in a nursery-ground, in a maze, and in mazelets, and each one values him by his handiwork, and at last he looks in his hands, which God had filled with strength and skill of all kinds, and he is angry at the gaping and sponging on others' creative-joy, and he returns to his heritage, sows, plants, waters, and enjoys himself and his own within heartily effective limits. Therefore may you be blessed where you stand and lie on God's earth, and so proceed that strong love may germinate in you out of her simplicity, whence mighty action blossoms forth. Farewell.

* The lines given above, p. 151, were also enclosed in this letter with the silhouette, which they were written to accompany. The portrait gives an exceedingly fine profile of Goethe at the age of twenty-five. It is reproduced: K. p. 184; and in a reduced form in Düntzer's *Life*, p. 187.

† Both this and the preceding letter are given as dated by A. Kestner, though it seems unlikely that they were written on the same occasion.

Here is an ode for which only the wanderer in distress finds out melody and meaning.

In exchange, I hope, for the continued diary of your travels, which Rost can go on with occasionally, so as to bring you both quite distinctly before me. Here are two Lav. for your brother and Rost, also one for Jung.

G.

193.—To Johanna Fahlmer, Frankfort.

[End of August, 1774.]

I must first look for the second volume.* Thanks especially for your kind sympathy in the high opinion I am adopting of the People.† Perhaps meantime a new Messiah will be born in the stable.

You have made me laugh heartily! Here is the French with the German.‡ To-day or to-morrow there will be some more 'Clavigos.'

G.

194.—To Frau von Laroche.

15 Sept.

I saw Max yesterday at the play; she is not pleased with me. Good God! indeed I myself am not. She has a headache. Let me ask you to give her your advice, and when you write to advise exercise. The poor child sticks at home so.

You asked after Lenz? I am sorry for Wieland that he is irritated against him, and irritated in a way that shows bad taste, whilst I am quiet. He is an unhappy man; between you and me, I have begged my friends not to mention his name to me any more. Lenz will not be reconciled to him, and Lenz is a dangerous enemy for him,

* Of a tale entitled: *The Spiritual Don Quixote; or, G. Wildgoose's Travels.* by J. G. Gellius. See Urlichs, p. 57. The original of it was probably *The Spiritual Quixote*, by Rev. Richard Graves (London, 1773), a satire on illiterate and itinerant Methodist preachers.

† i.e. The Jews; he refers to the composition of *The Wandering Jew.*—U.

‡ Beaumarchais' *Memoire*, on which *Clavigo* was founded, was translated by Jacobi in the *D. Merkur.*—U.

he has more genius than Wieland, although less tone and influence, and still——

Yes, dear Mama, I must leave the world as it is—and like Saint Sebastian, bound to my tree, the arrows in my sinews, laud and praise God. Hallelujah—Amen.

G.

195.—To Frau von Laroche.

19th Sept. 1774.

Early on Thursday a copy of 'Werther' goes to you. When you and yours have read it, send it on to Fritz; I have only three copies, and so must let these circulate.

Herr v. Groschlag * is here; I introduced myself to him, and he received me in a very friendly way, presented me to his wife, spoke freely with me on many subjects, much of you, enjoined me to remember him to you, and repeatedly invited me to Dieburg, whither I accordingly think of going on some fine autumn day. And so again I have become by so much more your debtor, if a son would not be as much in debt by his mere sonship. That he can repay with nothing but his whole existence.

You have now got your dear Max again; for a while you will refresh her heart with all motherly love! Good-bye, and tell me exactly what H. v. Hohenfeld says of 'Werther,' and also your feelings about the second volume.

G.

196.†—To Charlotte Kestner.

Lotte, how dear the little book is to me you may feel in reading it, and this copy also is as precious to me as if it were the only one in the world. You are to have it. I have kissed it a hundred times; have locked it up out of the way that no one should touch it. Oh Lotte!—And I beg you to let no one, except the Meyers, see it yet; it comes before the public only at the Leipsic Fair. I

* See *above*, p. 178. Herr von Groschlag had a beautiful villa at Dieburg in the Obenwald.

† Written to accompany a copy of *Werther*, but sent later with the next letter.

wish each of you to read it alone; you alone, Kestner alone, and each to write me a word or two. Lotte, adieu Lotte.

197.—To Kestner.

23 Sept. 1774.

You have the book already; so you will understand the accompanying little note. I forgot to enclose it in the hurlyburly in which I am now living. The fair blusters and shrieks, my friends are here, and the past and the future float one into the other strangely.

What will become of me? Oh, you already made people, how much better off you are!

Is Mme. Meyer back again? I beg you not to let the book go farther; and hold the living dear, and honour the dead.

Now you will understand the dark passages of preceding letters.

198.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[End of September, 1774.]

A word as a sign that I am alive. What does Fritz write? Has he got 'Werther'? I do not like to write to him, or send him anything, so as not to disturb him if he has it. Here is something, too, which will make you laugh, in that dress.* Adieu—a word or two in answer.

G.

199.†—To the Kestners.

[Oct. 1774.]

I must write to you at once, my dear ones—my angry ones—that it may come from the heart.

It is done, it is published, forgive me if you can. I will hear nothing, I pray you, I will hear nothing from you

* According to Urlichs, a copy of *Neueroffnetes moralisch-politisches Puppenspiel* in a fancy binding.

† Written in reply to a letter from Kestner, remonstrating on the portraiture of himself and his wife in *Werther*. He was especially

until the issue shall have proved that your apprehensions were overstrained, until even in the book itself you shall have felt more clearly in your hearts the innocent mixture of truth and falsehood. You, dear Kestner, an advocate full of kindness, have exhausted everything, have cut away everything, which I might have said in my defence; but I know not,—my heart has still more to say, although it cannot express itself.

I am silent, only I must hold out to you the glad presentiment—it pleases me to fancy and hope that eternal fate has allowed me to do this in order to bind us more firmly to one another. Yes, my best ones, I, who am so bound to you through love, must yet be for you and your children a defaulter for the evil hours which my—call it what you like—has brought upon you. Stay, I pray you, stay! And as in your last letter I perfectly recognize you Kestner, perfectly recognize you Lotte, so I beg you wait! wait through the whole affair, come what will—— God in Heaven, people say of Thee, Thou directest everything for the best.

And, my dear ones, if displeasure overcomes you, think, only think that your old Goethe ever more and more, and now more than ever, is yours.

200.—To Frau von Laroche.

21 October, 1774.

How precious to me is your last heartfelt [letter], how precious all that you can be to me. Hitherto I have lain stupified, absorbed in myself, and have been doubting in my soul again and again whether strength lay in me to bear all that brazen Fate has destined for me and mine in the future; whether I should find a rock whereon to build a fortress whither, in the last necessity, I could fly with my possessions. Dear Mama, I do not grudge you the hours of melancholy and sorrow; it is a relief, like the outpourings in prayer; but then, when you rise up from it,

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annoyed by the "miserable creature of an Albert," who occupies the same position as he himself did towards the real Charlotte. See K., No. 106.

allow your heart a free outlook over all the happiness that is ready for you in what you have left, and which perhaps is still potent over the unhappy angel. Farewell, and remember, in joy and sorrow,

G.

201.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[Middle of October, 1774.]

I do not like to come to you, dear Aunt, I am intolerant and intolerable. Herewith is the 'Spiritual Don Quixote.'* What do you hear of Fritz? I wonder when is he coming? Greet him heartily. I have something else good in all sorts of ways, but I am sitting over it again like a dragon. Fare ye right well.

G.

202.—To Professor Böckmann,† Carlsruhe.

[15 Nov. 1774.]

I am returning from the ice, after having just got through a party and through a supper at table, at which you were present too. I am very tired; I have been some distance, returned with my people, discovered new Straits, etc.

I have been on the ice, etc. 14th Nov. 1774.

This is only written to you in haste, just as I might be saying it to you. Ten o'clock at night again. More tomorrow.

On St. Martin's Eve—‡ (I kept the sheet last night for a letter, and will therefore continue it now)—on St. Martin's Eve we had the first ice, and from the Sunday to the Monday night it froze so hard that a small pond, which is very shallow, in front of the town, bore. Two [friends] discovered it next morning, told me of it, and at mid-day I forthwith went out, took possession of it, had the snow cleared away, the obstructing reeds cut down,

* See Letter 193, and note . ‡ i.e. Nov. 10th.

† Klopstock had visited Frankfort a month before, and *Kirchenrath* Böckmann had been sent thither from the Markgraf of Baden to invite him to Carlsruhe, and had so become intimate with Goethe. See Düntzer, *Leben*, p. 221.

broke through unbeaten ways, whereupon the others followed me with shovels and brooms, and I myself lent a hand to no small extent; and so, in a few hours, we had circumscribed and traversed the pond. And what pain it gave us when unfriendly night forced us to leave it. The moon would not come out from behind the snow-clouds, and to-day it is all thawing away. All this I have to announce at once in satisfaction of my debt, and I hope for the same from you. Have you had my skates made? I have not been able to find any one to whom I would have entrusted the making. Please send me the 'Satyros.'* And keep me in loving remembrance.

GOETHE.

203.—To JOHANNA FAHLMER.

[15 Nov. 1774.]

YESTERDAY, Auntie, I was on the ice, which is now continuously vanishing, from one o'clock till six. I went some distance, and came back with my friends. I am still constantly absorbed in all kinds of drawing, and have, besides, a heap of insignificant matters before me. The days are short, and art is long. Herewith goes a portfolio with all kinds of work, so that after some fashion I am coming to you. Keep it a few days, and then send it back to me. Adieu. The enclosed for Fritz.†

204.—To FRAU VON LAROCHE.

20 Nov. 1774.

I ANSWER you immediately, dear Mama. I have spoken to your Max at the play, and her husband too; he had all his friendliness packed together between his pointed nose and his pointed chin. There may come a time when I shall again enter the house, yet still I say the sea demands bodies, and I leave it alone.

Lavater will pay the china factory, and at a quieter time we will settle; to-day my heart is beating.

* Goethe's drama, *Satyros oder der vergötterte Waldteufel.*

† viz. His first contributions to the 'Iris,' *Kleine Blumen, Mayfest, Der neue Amadis.* They appeared in January.—F.

This afternoon I shall, for the first time, take the oil paint-brush in my hand! With what humility, reverence, and hope, I cannot express. The fate of my life hangs very much on the moment; it is a gloomy day! We shall see each other again in the sunshine.

Here is a short recipe for the worthy Baron v. Hohenfeld's Greek study: "If you have a Homer, good; if you have not, buy yourself Ernesti's, for Clark's verbal translation* is given with it; then procure Schaufelberg's 'Clavis Homerica' and if, together with these, you have a pack of white cards, then begin to read the 'Iliad.' Do not trouble about accent, but read as the melody of the hexameter flows on, and as it sounds beautiful to your soul, if you understand it, all is done; but if you do not understand, look at the translation, read the translation and the original, and the original and the translation, some twenty or thirty verses, until a light shines to you over the construction, which, in Homer, is the simplest picture-making. Then seize your 'Clavis,' where you will find line for line analysed; the present tense and the nominative write immediately on the cards, put them in your note-book, and then learn at home, and out abroad, as one whose heart rested entirely on God would pray, and so on, one set of thirty verses after another, and, having worked so through two or three books, I promise you you will stand gay and free before your Homer, and will understand him without translation, Schaufelberg, and cards. *Probatum est.*" Seriously, dear Mama, why is it thus and thus, and why, especially, must there be cards? Don't be inquisitive, cries the doctor! Why must it just be muslin in which the fowl is stuffed? Tell the most worthy scholar for his encouragement that Homer is the easiest author, but one that one must learn to understand from one's self.

Remember me to the Herr Geheimrath—I cannot come—and it is better for you have Fritz † alone.

Gladly, very gladly, would I speak to Herr v. Hohenfeld, and in your house, and because I wish it it will no doubt come to pass.

Great Lulu,‡ little Trosson,§ and Cordel.

* Cf. *Autobiog.*, xii. (trans. vol. i., p. 408). † Jacobi.
‡ The second daughter. § See letter 168.

Klopstock is a noble, great man, on whom the peace of God rests!

G.

205.—To Kestner.

21 Nov. 1774.

There, I have your letter, Kestner! at a strange desk, in a painter's studio, for yesterday I began to paint in oils. I have your letter, and must return thanks to you! Thanks, dear friend, you are always good! Oh, that I could fall on your neck, throw myself at Lotte's feet one, one minute, and all, all should be blotted out, explained, which I could never make clear through books and paper! Oh, ye unbelievers! would I cry, ye of little faith! Could you feel the thousandth part of what 'Werther' is to a thousand hearts, you would not reckon the cost which it has been to you. Now read this note, and send it me sacredly back, as you have it here. You send me Henning's letter; he does not accuse, he excuses me.* Dear brother Kestner, if you will wait you will be helped. I would not for my own life's sake recall 'Werther,' and believe me, believe in me, your anxieties, your *gravamina*, will vanish like spectres of the night if you have patience, and then—within a year, I promise you in the most *loving*, *truest*, and most fervent manner, to sweep away, as a pure north wind does fog and vapour, aught of suspicion, misinterpretation, &c., which may still remain amidst the gossiping public, although they are a herd of swine. Werther must—must be! You feel not *him*, you feel only me and you, and what "is plastered on" as you call it, and, in spite of you and others, *interwoven*. If I continue living it is you whom I shall thank—so you are not Albert—and so——

Give Lotte a warm grasp of the hand from me, and tell her: To know that your name is uttered with reverence by a thousand sacred lips is surely an equivalent for anxieties which would hardly, apart from everything else,

* Kestner's friend Von Hennings had written from Berlin, condoling with him on the unhappy circumstances which he thought were revealed in *Werther*. Kestner's reply is given in full in *G. und W.*, p. 224.

vex one long in every-day life, where one is exposed to every gossiping woman.

If you are good, and do not worry me, I will send you letters, cries, sighs after 'Werther,' and, if you have faith, believe that all will be well, and that gossip is nothing, and lay to heart your philosopher's letter, which I have kissed.

O thou! hast thou not felt how the man embraces thee, comforts thee—and in thine, in Lotte's worth finds consolation against the misery which terrifies you even in the fiction? Lotte, farewell. You, Kestner—love me—and do not worry me.

G.

Show this letter to no man! [it is] between you two! Let no one else see it! Adieu, you dear ones. Kestner, kiss your wife and my godson for me.

And remember my promise. I alone can devise means to put you completely out of reach of all gossip beyond the breath of suspicion. I have it in my power, but it is as yet too soon. Greet your Hennings very heartily from *me*.

A girl said to me yesterday, I did not think that Lotte was such a pretty name! It has a sound quite peculiar to itself in 'Werther.'

Another wrote lately: I beg you, for God's sake, not to call me Lotte any more! Lottchen, or Lolo—whatever you like—only not Lotte, until I am worthier of the name than I now am.

O magic power of love and friendship!

Zimmermann's note shortly. It is cold, I cannot go up to look for it. To-day the ice bears. Dear ones, adieu.

206.—To J. G. Jacobi.*

Frankfort, 1 Dec., 1774.

My dear Canonicus,

To-day I received the 'Iris' from Fritz; a few glances which I cast over it awaken in me the feeling

* He was Canon of Halberstadt.

of past times, and, at the same time, the memory of a few songs which came to me. I propose to myself to send them to you, and as I have come to-day, after dinner, to the dear Aunt's, who finds the idea good and what I have repeated to her suitable to the tone of your collection, I straightway devote myself to you, and write down from memory what you receive herewith. If you can use it, put different initials beneath, telling nobody anything about it, and the ladies and gentlemen will have something to guess.

Farewell. Do not forget the pleasant hours that brought us in the circuit from Düsseldorf to Cologne. We expect Fritz towards the end of the year. You, too, might as well try some day what being stranded in a free city is like. Aunt greets you.

GOETHE.

Punctuate the ballads as will best suit the reader.

207.—To SALZMANN.

Frankfort, 5 December, 1774.

IT is again time that you should once in a way hear something direct from me; that I should tell you everything is going on in its old way with me. You will somehow have heard and seen that I have not been quite idle, and will I hope hear and see still more before long. You again have a fellow-countryman of mine with you. What is he likely to do? I wager that you are a good deal better pleased with him than with the brother. I should also much like to hear from you how Lenz gets on.

And now the question is whether your moral dissertations* should be printed for Easter? I find three amongst my papers: on Emotions, Inclinations and Passions; on Virtue and Vice; and on Religion. If you would first like to have them back for revision, say so, and I will send you them by the mail-coach. If you have anything else of the same kind, add it thereto, and it shall go straight to Leipsic. Tell me at the same time what conditions you wish made, and forthwith the little book will be already

* Comp. Letter 97.

as good as finished and bound. Write to me as soon as possible, and believe that it would be no sin to write to me oftener than you have hitherto done, in order to recall me from my other enthusiasms, back to the happy regions where we spent so many pleasant hours.

Hold me dear, and continue to take an interest in me and mine, and believe that my thoughts return very warmly to your yellow room, to the Fire-side * and the '*Sile.*'

GOETHE.

208.†—To HANS BUFF.

[? December, 1774.]

THANK you, dear Hans, very much for your letter. Go on so, I beg you.

Here are four copies of *Iris;* be so good as to give them to the four ladies who are named here on the little note.

You still have, if I am not mistaken, some money in keeping for me. I beg you to accept it as a Christmas gift, and to get your brothers and sisters something with it also.

Greet Papa and your sisters and Mlle. Brand. Will none of them take after Lotte?

G.

209.—To HENRIETTE VON KNEBEL,‡ AUSBACH.

[From Captain von Kneble and Goethe.]

Mainz, 13 December, 1774.

MY DEAREST HENRIETTE,

I HAD written to you yesterday from Frankfort; our friend Goethe came, and I burnt the half-finished letter.

* See note *, p. 154.

† A. Kestner assigns this letter to the year 1773, but the reference to the *Iris* shows it to have been after his reconciliation with Jacobi. His former opinion about the journal, which did not actually appear till 1774, may be gathered from Letter 129.

‡ Sister of Captain Carl Ludwig von Knebel (b. 1744), who was now instructor to the younger Prince, Constantine, of Weimar. He was accompanying the Princes to Paris, and took the opportunity of introducing Goethe to them at Mainz. Von Knebel was intimate with some of the best German writers, and was himself the author of translations of *Lucretius* and *Propertius*. See *Autobiog.*, bk. XV.

What shall I say to you my good child? It is all too much to tell you. I remained yesterday alone in Frankfort to enjoy the best of all men. To-day I have travelled hither with him, where we have met our Princes again, and this evening we are going to the play. I have crossed the Rhine this mid-day for the first time. To-morrow we go away from here again, and straight on.

There, your brother will not go on now, and perhaps indeed cannot, for he is in the state of excitement which you must know very well, since I know it who have been with him a day and a half. And yet I want the letter to be finished and sealed, otherwise it will share the fate of one which was burnt yesterday evening, and I maintain that though an author should leave many sheets unfinished, or, if they are finished, should burn them, yet a brother to his sister, on the contrary, may send off and despatch the most insignificant octavo sheet. For I have a sister, and therefore know what you can be to your brother. And so farewell; the letter shall go off now, if only to assure you that your brother is very well in old Mainz and loves you very much. Now it seems laughable, perhaps, that I should write that for him. But not so; for a man who is in good condition and a genuine lover is not a good story writer. I am hardly so either, as you may see by my hand and courtliness; but no matter; I hope that you may have as beautiful an evening whilst reading this, as I whilst writing it, and so I do not ask whether my faithful fist may perhaps seem a little too rough. I pray you make up to your brother, for what he has done for me.

GOETHE.

POSTSCRIPTUM.—Your brother could not read the foregoing right, so it occurs to me that perhaps you also will not be able to read it, and so please suppose I had spoken it somewhat too gently in the court tone, and that you had therefore not understood me.

I cannot add a word more, except that you will see from the foregoing that the author of the 'Sorrows of the Young Werther' is the most loveable fellow in the world, and in

this way I am very fortunate. He was obliged to accompany us from Frankfort here to Mainz. The day after to-morrow, I hope to go straight on to Carlsruhe.

Write to me there whether the hundred thalers have been sent to Weimar. This is now my only anxiety. I hope that this will have been done for me, for the contrary would be inexcusable indeed.

Farewell, dearest Henrietta. Greet our beloved parents, our brothers. Enclose your letter to Carlsruhe under the address: To Herr Legationsrath Klopstock, Carlsruhe,—and inside the envelope, please, the present letter to be delivered on my arrival. Adieu, dearest child! I must go, and can remain only in thought almost always with you.

Your CARL.

EW. GNADEN must not be annoyed at the form of the present writing, it is all meant in very good part.

GOETHE.

210.—To FRAU VON LAROCHE.

[22 Dec. 1774.]

IF I could but give you, dear Mama, something very good for your kind letters. What I have I willingly give. I have not seen the Dean for some time. I have been at Mainz! I travelled thither after Wieland's Prince,* who is an excellent man. From there I wrote to Wieland, so it occurred to me to do, and I have had an answer, too, such as I foresaw. It is a confounded thing, that I am beginning to have misunderstandings with nobody. There is a misunderstanding between Serviere† and the little one; nothing but misunderstanding, and so a thing goes on like a fallen stitch in a stocking, which in the beginning could be taken up with a needle. Next concert evening I will take the little one; to-day I was at the old aunt's (the very Serviere), who is very kind. So goes the world, and I am excellent at smoothing such affairs. If I

* Karl August, the Crown Prince of Saxe-Weimar, who assumed the government in September the next year.

† This lady is briefly mentioned in the *Autobiog.*, under the name of Servières, as a member of the Brentano circle at Frankfort. See bk. xiii. (trans. i. 510).

can be any support to Herr v. Hohenfeld* in the world it will be a great pleasure to me; I wish him happiness in his Greek. One day he will be thankful for the trouble he has given himself. To-day I received back a copy of 'Werther,' I had lent about, which had passed on from one to another, and lo! on the blank page in front is written, "Tais-toi, Jean Jacques, ils ne te comprendront point!" It had the most peculiar effect on me, because this passage in Emile has always been very remarkable to me.

My Klettenberg is dead,† before I had a suspicion that she was dangerously ill. Dead and buried in my absence, who was so dear, so much to me! Mama that stings the fellows, and teaches them to hold their heads straight—as for me—yet a little longer will I tarry. Only come, my chair awaits you, that is evidence between me and you that we will have good cheer. You have now probably received the Almanac for Max and also sent it back to her.

Reich's letter is good. One carolin,‡ for the printed sheet he could well give as a bookseller. I do not care to think of what one gets for one's things, and yet perhaps the booksellers are not to blame. My authorship has not yet made my soup rich, and will not, and also is not intended to do so. Once on a time, when a great public was occupied with Berlichingen, and I gained so much praise and satisfaction from all sides, I found myself obliged to borrow money, to pay for the paper on which I had had it printed.§—I am glad that Lulu is happily through the dangerous pass, I knew of it from Max, and was rather anxious.

The political newspaper of this place is sometimes good, but throughout neither for the head nor the mind of a man like Herr v. Hoh[enfeld.] Adieu, Mama: *at daybreak after the longest night*, 1774.

G.

* See p. 146, note ‡.
† She died on the 13th, the day he went to Mainz.
‡ A gold coin equivalent to about twenty shillings sterling.
§ See *above*, p. 144, note.

211.—To H. C. Boie.

Frankfort, 23 Dec. 1774.

Again a word, my dear Boie, which I have so long owed you, and hearty thanks for the things sent. Schönborn writes from Algiers, greets you, and says that you will send me a few things for him. Please do so at once, and also a *Gel. Republ.** for him; the poor fellow has not read it yet. I will put everything together for him, and send them to Marseilles. He will then receive them just about the spring. Keep our frugal evening in remembrance, and send me the Niobe in the meantime in part payment; very carefully packed, please. You cannot think how much I am in want again of some such a sight. You shall have a quite recently-finished medallion of my nose, which is very successful. That is indeed lead for gold, but to my lead I add a large quantity of goodwill.

You will receive the promised poems, too, directly. Hahn is a very dear man. I am drawing more than I do anything else, and I am also versifying a good deal. But I am getting everything ready to begin, with the entrance of the sun into the Ram, a new production, which ought to have your own tone. There is skating again; adieu, ye Muses! or rather, out with me onto the ice, whither ye must follow Klopstock. Good-bye, dear fellow. Remember me kindly.

G.

212.—To Frau von Laroche.

Here is a piece of my ill-manners, dear Mama, I am furious, perplexed; and therefore get hold of only few ideas. I have spoken to dear Max at the play, I have again seen the eyes, I know not what is in the eyes.

Send the letter to Zich [?] however. How long must I still remain your debtor for money; for all debts—other debts I would not willingly discharge.

G.

* Klopstock's *Republic of Learning.*

213.—To Hieronymus Peter Schlosser.*

26 Dec. 1774.

Thank you, dear Brother, for the *Poematia*,† the *Lepores* of the same have pleased me more than ever, and my father, although he knew your strength in Latin poetry, was extremely surprised at your strength in erotic works. Herewith I send you the petition for Arnstein, which I have just dictated on a fasting stomach; be so good as write your remarks and corrections by the side of it, remind me of anything I have possibly forgotten, for giddiness ruffles my pate early in the morning. But I should like to have it back again after dinner. You are, indeed, so indulgent. I know how obliging you are. Therefore, in return, may the Deus *Ludius* banish the two black aces from your hands all this evening. Adieu. *Si quid novi*, inform me of it. Everybody pities poor Deinet, that you have so chained him to your poetic triumphal chariot, and that he must now, *nolens volens*, trot after it to all eternity.

G.

214.—To Carl Ludwig von Knebel.‡

Frankfort, 28 December, 1774.

I must just begin, dear Knebel, I must tap you, otherwise I suppose I shall learn nothing of all that I should so much like to know: How you have all been hitherto? What effect the new men have on you? I should like to have my share in everything as far as I am allowed to know. To begin, therefore, about myself. I

* The elder brother of Goethe's brother-in-law, Johann Georg Schlosser. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xii. This letter is not included in Hirzel's collection, having been published since by Frese in *Fritz Schlosser's Nachlass*, with the letters to Frau von Laroche and others. It is remarkable, considering Goethe's intimacy with the two brothers, that this is the only early letter known to either. Frese gives a facsimile of a clever pencil portrait of H. P. Schlosser by Goethe.

† Some Latin verses printed at Frankfort. They included a long *Epithalamium* on his brother's marriage.

‡ See Letter 209.

felt quite strange, when I stood under the gate of the Three Crowns as day began to break, just as if dropped down from the grasp of a bird into a strange world among all the stars and crosses, and wafted about therein with an open heart, and suddenly all vanished.

And now I have just received your letter; pardon me for my unbelief. Thanks! hearty thanks! If possible, the Landgravine's obituary verses shall be prepared. I am very glad about your sister. Wieland has written to me, has accepted my greeting exactly as I gave it him. Commend me sincerely to those princes. Does Graf Görz* feel anything towards me? Write me, please, a few significant words about President Hahn. In comparison with other presidents! Each one after his kind. Your words about Klopstock are splendid. Hold me dear. Do not let my affairs go out of your hands. It would be of no importance if certain people did not make something out of it. And then please, if possible, sound the Margrave and the President for me about my brother-in-law Schlosser.

Even unimportant words give light. Adieu, when shall we see each other again.

G.

215.—To Frau von Voigts† (née Möser), Osnabrück.

Frankfort-on-Maine, 28 Dec. 1774.

Madame,

We are assuredly very much pleased if in the course of a walk we meet with an echo; it amuses us, we call, it answers; should the public then be harder, more unsympathetic than a rock? Shameful is it that the mean reviewers should answer from their holes, in the name of all those to whom an author or an editor has given pleasure.

Here, however, madame, accept my individual thanks

* Tutor to the Crown Prince of Weimar.

† A daughter of Justus Möser of Osnabrück, whose essays she was collecting and editing under the title *Patriotische Phantasien*. See *Autob.* (trans.), i. 518, & ii. 42, and Düntzer, *Leben*, p. 226.

for the Patriotic Fancies of your father, which, by your means, have first come before me and the neighbourhood hereabout. I carry them about with me, and wherever I open them I am thoroughly well-pleased, and hundreds of wishes, hopes, enterprises, are unfolded in my soul. Commend me to your father. Accept this greeting with all the heartiness with which I give it, and do not let yourself be hindered in the publication of your second volume. Madame, your most devoted

GOETHE.

216.—To Frau von Laroche.

[? 28 Dec. 1774.]*

WHAT, dear Mama, what is the heart of man? Are not real ills enough? Must it still create out of itself imaginary ones? But of what do I complain? Unrest and uncertainty are our lot, and let us bear them with courage, like a brave son who has taken upon himself his father's debts. Our letters have crossed. Here is Reich's † letter back, my previous letter answers the rest. Only I have not spoken to the Dean,‡ I have not liked to talk with him about Max. Why will she go away? She said to me yesterday: "It is an idea of Brentano's, you must first say yes to it; perhaps he will change his mind again." And then, Mama, in such cases it is as in illness—in bed, out of bed, and in again, one hopes, and betters one's condition at least for the moment of the change.

The letter to Kalckhof § is just as you sent it away—So far, I wrote on the 14th, to-day, the 28th, I send you both letters back; thanks, many thanks. O let me continue to hear something of my neighbour Gorgias. You shall hear something in return in time. Adieu.

* This is placed three months earlier by Frese; but it seems to be subsequent to that of Dec. 22.

† The Leipsic bookseller, who published Wieland's works.

‡ Dumeix, Dean of the collegiate foundation of S. Leonard in Frankfort. He and Merck were chiefly responsible for Maximiliane's marriage with Brentano, which did not turn out happily.

§ Attaché to Herr von Groschlag.

Greet Herr v. Hohenfeld heartily; write to me when and what your heart bids.

Adieu, GOETHE.

217.—TO PHILIPP ERASMUS REICH, LEIPSIC.

Frankfort, 2nd January, 1775.

Hochadelgebohrner insonders hochzuehrender Herr,

IT affords me much pleasure at the very beginning of the new year to find an opportunity of reminding you of your old friendship for me. Lavater has charged me to transmit to you the accompanying commencement of the manuscript on Physiognomy, about which there is the following arrangement. The translation of the introduction is committed to my care;* on the other hand, you are yourself to get the fragments, from page 7 onwards, translated by Herr Huber. At page 17, where a + in pencil is marked, as also at page 21, some additions will probably be sent. Should these however not make their appearance, it is already noted in both places, for the information of the compositor, that these marks have no further significance. If you will kindly advise me of the receipt of these papers, and at the same time give me any hints towards the furthering and completion of this work, I will look after everything with the best diligence; since, in addition to the fact that the transmission of the manuscript will be chiefly in my hands, I shall thus frequently have the honour of assuring you of the great respect with which I sign myself,

Ew Hochadelgeb.

Very faithful servant,

GOETHE.

* Goethe was to have the introduction translated into French by Gotter. (Lavater's letter to Reich, 20th Jan. 1775.)—O. J.

218.*—To Frau von Laroche.

3 Jan. 1775.

Here, dear Mama, are the Letters † back, which I find excellent; the 29th, because of its happy tone, in which it puts forwards such serious matter; the 38th, because it gives to the whole of your letters a finish, application, and instructiveness.

My sister has a little girl; they remain at Emmendingen, where Schlosser directs the Margraviate of Hochberg. Whilst I was sorting and destroying the letters of the past year, many old new ideas passed through my head. If one has rolled the moral snowball of one's I a year further, it has surely taken up something good somewhere. God avert a thaw. I do not know any such grammar, so I have ordered Rambach's of Eslinger. Of dear Max you know, most likely, more particulars than I. Perhaps I shall see her to-day at the concert. Adieu, remember me to H. v. Hohenfeld.

G.

219.—To Hans Buff.

9 January, 1775.

Here, dear Hans, is a letter to Lotte. Will you take the money from the ladies,‡ from each four and a half florins, and send it me when there is an opportunity.

Your letters have made me laugh heartily over joy and sorrow. Go on loving me, and greet everybody.

G.

220.—To C. L. von Knebel.

Frankfort, 13 January, 1775.

Dear Knebel,

I beg you very earnestly for a word from yourself

* Between Letter No. 216 and this, Frese prints 4 short undated notes evidently sent by hand when the lady was staying in Frankfort.

† *Rosalie's Letters*, by Frau von Laroche, appeared consecutively in the *Iris*.

‡ See Letter 208.

and about my affairs. Where are you? Am I in your kind remembrance? Addio. I have had a few very good productive days.

G.

221.—To Frau von Laroche.

Frankfort, 18 Jan. 1775.

Here is a letter from Max: we are now, especially I, right happy in life; it is a hard drive. Think of us. I have written to Merck about your Letters, but as yet have had no answer. Fritz has written to you. Adieu. Hold me dear.

G.

222.—To Herder.

The moment at which I received your letter, dear Brother, was highly significant. I had just been calling vividly to mind the doings and misdoings between us, when, lo! you enter, and stretch out your hand to me. Now you have mine, and let us begin a new life with one another, for, in truth, I have hitherto continued to live for you, and you for me.

Be to me ever henceforward affectionate and good, dear Sister! * It will do me good to have a share again in your boy and household. Farewell. I shall soon send you something of my doing.

Goethe.

223.—To J. H. Merck.

Frankfort, January, 1775.

Had I not been very busy, I should have been jealous of your drawings. They are very good, and your mind unfolds itself in many ways, most honoured Sir! I have nothing to send you. For hitherto my work has consisted of life-size portraits and little love-lays. Do you know the Dean† has sent me a hearty good letter. I took

* This is, of course, addressed to Herder's wife.
† Herder. See note, p. 103.

you for Christian Lachæus *Telonarcha*, but I see now it is Haman. Again a grand strengthening. . . .

224.—To Countess Auguste zu Stolberg.*

Frankfort, 26 January, 1775.

To the dear Nameless One.

My dear ——,

I will give you no name, for what are the names Friend, Sister, Beloved, Bride, Wife, or a word which comprises a complex of all those names, beside the direct feeling—to the—— I cannot write further, your letter has caught me at a wonderful time. Adieu, though at the first moment!——

Yet I return—— I feel you can endure it, this disjointed stammering expression, when the image of the Eternal stirs in us. And what is that but Love?——If He was forced to make man after His image, a race that should be like Himself, what must we feel when we find brothers, our likeness, ourselves doubled? And so it shall go, so shall you have this sheet. I wrote the above a week ago, immediately after the receipt of your letter.

Have patience with me, soon you shall have an answer. Here, in the meantime, is my silhouette, I beg for yours, but not in miniature; I beg for the large outline taken from nature. Adieu, a most hearty adieu.

Goethe.

The letter has again remained unsent; oh, have patience with me! Write to me, and I will think of you in my best hours. You ask if I am happy? Yes, my best one, I am; and if I am not, at least there dwells in me all the deep emotion of joy and sorrow. Nothing outside myself disturbs, plagues, hinders me. But I am as a little child, God knows. Once more, adieu.

* The third daughter of Count Christian Gunther zu Stolberg, and sister of the two Counts Stolberg, with whom Goethe presently became intimate. She was born Jan. 7, 1753, and was therefore at this date just twenty-two years old. The correspondence with Goethe, who had never seen her, was commenced by an anonymous letter from her referring to *Werther*, to which the following was a reply. She married Count P. A. Bernstorff in 1783.

225.—To Frau Jacobi.

6th February, 1775.

Fritz is now gone, and you can think what a good thing it was for us, for latterly the matter had become somewhat painful to us, especially to me, and I begged Fritz to go. Already I am somewhat better, although he has not yet been twenty-four hours gone. So things go with me, for ever topsy-turvy. Continue to like me a little! I wish sometimes, and sometimes I hope, that you and the girls keep a warm heart for me amongst you. Here is something for the *Iris*. More soon. If Fritz had not gone nothing would have been done. The bell is ringing for dinner. *Postscr.* And let the boys have a greeting from me. Addio.

G.

226.—To Johanna Fahlmer.

[About 10th–12th February, 1775.]

I am an ass not to have come somewhat later yesterday. The sealed enclosure is for Rost.* It contains five sheets of an operetta. Forward it immediately, but not with other things—quite alone—by the horse-post. Here are also a few sheets of transcript. If you wish to copy it, do not copy more than the first scene for George; perhaps the second as well. Greet him; greet Fritz. To-morrow Jung is coming.† Frankfort is the new Jerusalem, where all people go in and out, and the righteous dwell.

227.—To Countess Auguste zu Stolberg.

Frankfort, 13 Feb. 1775.

To the dear Nameless One.

If you can picture to yourself, my dear, a Goethe in a laced coat, otherwise from head to foot in tolerably

* See note, p. 195. The operetta was *Erwin u. Elmire*, begun in 1773.

† To perform the operation described in the *Autobiography*, bk. xvi.

consistent finery, illuminated by the unmeaning splendour of sconces and chandeliers, amidst all kinds of people, kept at the card-table by a pair of beautiful eyes, and, in varying dissipation, driven from company to concert, and from thence to a ball, and with all the interest of frivolity paying court to a pretty Blondine;* you have the present Carnival-Goethe, who lately stammered forth to you a few gloomy, deep feelings, who cannot write to you, who sometimes too forgets you, because in your presence he feels himself quite unbearable.

But now there is another, in grey beaver coat, with brown silk necktie and boots, who already detects the spring in the freshening February air, to whom his dear wide world will now soon reopen again, who, ever living, striving, and working in himself, seeks to express, according to his power, sometimes the innocent feelings of youth in little poems, the strong spices of life in various dramas, the forms of his friends and his neighbourhood and his beloved household goods with chalk upon grey paper; asking neither on the right nor left, what of all that he does will last? because working he ever ascends a step higher, because he will leap at no ideal, but, fighting and playing, will leave his feelings to develop themselves to activity. He it is, from whose mind you are never absent, who suddenly in early morning feels a summons to write to you; whose greatest happiness is to live with the best men of his time.

So here, my best friend, is very varied news of my state; now do the same, and entertain me with yours, so we shall draw nearer together, and believe we see each other. For this I tell you beforehand, that I shall often entertain you with many trifles as they dart into my mind.

One thing more which makes me happy is the many noble men, who from all ends of my Fatherland, amongst many indeed that are insignificant, insupportable, come into my neighbourhood, to me, sometimes passing on, some-

* He refers, of course, to *Lili*, whose real name was Anna Elizabeth Schönemann. He had been introduced to her family on the previous New Year's Eve. See *Autobiog.*, book xvi., etc., and Düntzer, *Leben*, p. 229.

times staying. We only know that we are, when we find ourselves again in others.

Moreover, if it were disclosed to me who and where you are, it would make no difference; when I think of you I feel nothing but equality, love, nearness! And so remain to me, as I surely remain, through all whirl and hurly-burly, unalterable. 'Tis well indeed!—one hand-kiss—Farewell.

GOETHE.

228.—To P. E. REICH.

Frankfort, 14th Feb. 1775.

YOUR last valued letter I duly received through Herr Jonas, and yesterday the proof-sheets also, which I will immediately forward. I have already written to Lavater respecting the vignettes. The Judas after Holbein is not a vignette, but a large plate, and I confidently believe the Christ is also, although I have not yet seen it; but of this you shall hear directly. Probably Herr Jonas has written to inform you what precaution we took at once on [receiving] your last. As the Book-Board requires a formal notice, this will be prepared by the brother in Büdingen, wherein the citation of the 4th and 5th parts of Gellert's works* will furnish the clearest and simplest proof of the violation of the Imperial ordinance; wherefore I have advised that there should be demanded of the Board a requisition to the magistrate, throwing upon him the onus of proceeding at least in the first instance against Schiller. As regards a depôt here for Saxon books,† I have too little insight into the affair to be able to form a sound opinion on the subject; it would always be a difficult matter to find a bookseller for the purpose, who would be willing to bind himself. What I can do in this matter I will do with pleasure. Have the kindness to give me further information and instructions on this point.

* Gellert's *Moral* had been pirated by Göbhardt, in Bamberg. —O. J.

† This refers to Reich's suggestion to found in Frankfort an establishment for the sale of North German publications.—O. J.

By yesterday's post some further additions to the ninth number of 'Physiognomical Fragments' were sent you, along with an enclosure for Professor Oeser, which I beg you will be good enough to hand to him.

GOETHE, Dr.

229.—To J. FAHLMER.

[Middle February, 1775.]

PLEASE forward that immediately, dear Aunt. I am writing at the operetta. As soon as you can send me —or rather send me the second sheet which you have, only for an hour, so that I can have it copied, then you can keep it as long as you like. I wish you a friendly good morning. I am anxiously expecting a word from Merck and Fritz.

G.

230.—To FRAU VON LAROCHE.

Frfort., 17 Feb. 1775.

Good luck to Max,* and soon good luck to the little grandchild, and greet the little mother. You will have told yourself the half-reason why I did not write; I thought you had something against me, and that was unbearable to me; besides that, I have been such a Carnival-Goethe, involved in crowds and revels and something more that I have been unable to do anything.

Fritz, who will now soon return, must tell you about me; we were very happy and intimate together. I hope Max will say a little good of me, with the evil she has to say of me. I greet her heartily. I should like to hear something also of my most worthy Grecian. The Privy Counsellor is, I suppose, in Vienna, but will soon return, and remember me also. Good-bye, Mama. Ever yours,

G.

* Who was now with her mother expecting her first child.

231.—To G. A. Bürger.

Frankfort, 17 Feb. 1775.

God bless you, dear Brother, with your wife, and when you dwell on her heart, think of me and feel that I love you. It is difficult to say anything of my perplexities; diligent I certainly have not been lately. The spring air which already breathes so often across the gardens, works again on my heart, and I hope something will be saved again from the slaughter. Be kindly disposed to what comes from me. You are ever with me, even when silent as lately. Your 'Europa' and 'Robber-count' are much amongst us. Adieu.

Goethe.

232.—To J. Fahlmer.

[March 1775.]

Here, dear Aunt, is something from Fritz. What think you of it? Shall I get back Lenz's Words of Love?* Wieland is and remains a ——, see p. 96 of the accompanying Mercurius. Everlasting enmity be between my seed and their seed.

I am quite unbearable, and therefore busy with work that occupies the senses.† I cannot come. God give you something to push forward. With me no good ending comes.‡ Adieu.

When you send something to Fritz, he must have 'Pœtus and Arria.'§

* According to Urlichs these were Lenz's *Briefe üb. Werther's Moralität*, which he had sent to Jacobi. The remark about Wieland refers to a review in the Jan. No. of the *Iris*, of some Dramatic Notes by Lenz. See U., p. 67.

† *Sinnlicher Arbeit:* he probably means drawing.

‡ Probably a reference to his relation with Lili. See next Letter.

§ A romance by Merck.

233.—To J. Fahlmer.

[5th March, 1775.]

Hearty thanks, dear Aunt, for all. To-morrow or the day after 'Stella' will certainly come, and I sooner or later. Yesterday I went from you straight home, from there—oho!—I hope to draw you into our circle; by Heaven, Aunt, you cannot feel very much amiss therein—Lili is very dear, and esteems you cordially. Perhaps to-morrow morning I will carry out my proposal to you of a walk with Mama and me. Adieu. Continue good to me.

234.—To J. Fahlmer.

[6th March, 1775.]

Here are the first sheets of 'Stella.' If it amuses you, copy it. To Fritz this piece will certainly be ten times more acceptable from your hand.

No walk to-day; but I will come for a little and read the continuation.

Yesterday I went round the town with the Runckels,* Lili met us in a carriage with her mother, I was very stupid and mad. And I played ombre from six till eight with Loischen and Ries.† Adieu, dear Aunt.

G.

235.—To Countess Auguste zu Stolberg.

[6th March, 1775.]

Why should I not write to you? why lay down the pen again for which I have so often reached my hand? How have I ever, ever been thinking of you. And now!—In the country among very dear people, in expectation. Dear Augusta, God knows I am a poor youth. The 28th February we danced out the close of Carnival. I was there among the first in the room, walked up and down,

* Friends of his sister's.

† Loischen is Antoinette Louise Gerock, and Ries the J. J. Riese to whom Letters 3–5 are addressed.

and thought of you—and then much joy and love surrounded me. The next morning, as I came home, I was going to write to you, but I left it and talked much with you. What shall I tell you, since I cannot quite tell you my present position, as you do not know me. Love! Love! Remain kind to me. I wish I could rest on your hand, repose in your eyes. Great God! what is the heart of man? Good-night. I thought I should get better whilst writing. In vain, my head is overstrained, Adieu. To-day is the 6th March, I think. You, too, must always write the date, at such a distance it is a great pleasure.

Good-morning, dear. The carpenters who are erecting a building over there have awakened me, and I have no rest in bed. I will write to my sister, and then another word to you.

It is night; I was going into the garden again, but was obliged to remain standing under the doorway; it is raining hard. Much have I thought of you! Thought that I had not yet thanked you for your silhouette. How often have I already thanked you for it; how is mine and my Brother Lavater's physiognomical faith again confirmed. This pure intellectual forehead, this sweet firmness of the nose, these dear lips, this well-defined chin, the nobility of the whole! Thank you, my love, thank you. To-day has been a wonderful day, I have drawn—written a scene. Oh, if I did not write dramas now, I should perish! Soon I will send you one written. Would that I could sit opposite to you and work it out in your heart!—only take care, love, that it does not leave your hands. I must not let it be printed, for I wish in future, if God will, to bury or to settle my —— and my children in a little corner; without flaunting it in the face of the public. I am so sick of the unearthing and printing of my poor 'Werther.' Wherever I enter a room I find the Berlin pack,* etc.; one blames it, the next praises it,

* Nicolai of Berlin had been an adverse critic of *Werther*, and had published a parody of it called *The Joys of Young Werther*, in which the hero shoots himself with chicken's blood only, and afterwards marries Charlotte.

a third says it is tolerable, and one irritates me as much as another—come now, you must not think ill of me for that. It does not interest me in my inner whole, does not move or affect me in my works, which are always only the stored-up joys and sorrows of my life—for although I find that it is much more reasonable to shed chicken's blood than one's own——The children are romping overhead; it is better for me to go up than to carry my text too far.

I have set the eldest girl to spell a page and a half in the little garden of Eden up there; I am well content, and it is the blessed meal-time. Adieu! Why do I not tell you all, best one? Have patience, patience with me.

The 10th; in the town again to see my shepherdess. I am writing to you on my knee. Dear, the letter shall go to-day, and I only tell you further, that my head is tolerably gay, my heart pretty free. What say I! O best one, how shall we find expression for what we feel! Best one, how can we tell one another anything of our state, since it changes from hour to hour.

I am hoping for a letter from you, and let not the hope be disappointed.

Blessed is the good impulse which prompted me, instead of all further writing, to draw my room for you, as it now stands before me. Adieu. Keep a poor youth in your heart. The Good Father in heaven give you many brave, cheerful hours, such as I often have, and then let the twilight come tearful and blessed. Amen. Adieu, dear, Adieu.

GOETHE.

236.—To J. H. MERCK.

HERE is something for what you sent. I have been working for the last three days at a drawing with my utmost possible diligence, and have not yet finished. It is well for once to do everything one can do, in order to have the merit of knowing oneself more intimately. Greet your wife and children. Send me back the studies

and something new with them. Adieu. I am learning something from the ballads: and I am just going to Off'b. [Offenbach], whereby hangs a tale. Tuesday, &c., &c., &c., half-past seven in the morning.

G.

237.—To Frau von Laroche.

Frfort. 15 March, 1775.

God bless you, dear, dear Grandmama, and the little mama and the boy. I hope the intervention of the little creature will make a good deal of difference. I can indeed say I expect them back very longingly. I am now going to Brentano to congratulate him. Greet Herr v. Hohenfeld. Fritz has, I see, produced my last small family;* he is kind. Very soon you shall again receive something, which I commend to your heart. On Friday I shall be here, so I expect.

Good-bye. To the dear little mother, good-bye! Will there come a time then in which we shall have a friendly influence on each other, dear Max? You shall soon have your Letters back again.

Goethe.

238.—To J. Fahlmer.

[Offenbach, March 1775.]

I knew what 'Stella' would be to your heart. I am tired of bewailing the fate of *our race* of men,† but I will represent them; they shall recognise themselves, if possible, as I have known them, and shall be, if not more at rest, yet stronger in unrest.

There is much wonderful and new in me; in three hours I hope to see Lili. Dear Aunt, on Sunday!!! Take the girl to your heart, it will be good for you both. Have you overcome the longing for the fifth act? I wish you had one made for it. Adieu. 'Stella' is already yours, and through the writing becomes ever more yours.‡ What pleasure Fritz will have!

* Probably some poems in the *Iris*.

† i.e., men of wild impulses, as Düntzer explains.

‡ She was copying it out. See Letter 234.

239.—To Fritz Jacobi.

21 March, 1775.

Thank you for all, Erwin, money, etc., Dear Brother. I am very glad that you like my 'Stella' so much; my heart and mind are now so entirely turned in other directions, that my own flesh and blood are almost indifferent to me. I can tell you nothing, for what is there that can be said? I do not wish either to think of to-morrow or the day after to-morrow, therefore adieu. Let the enclosed be well attended to by Schenk, it is for the second dear brother. Keep by me, dear Fritz; it seems to me as if I were going alone on skates for the first time, and stumbling on the path of life, and had already to run for a wager, and that to where all my soul is striving. Brother, dear fellow, you will now probably have impressions of the airs, and something from Lenz; I am waiting for 'Stella,' and then you shall have the other copy at once. Cl.* is off to Cannabich.

G.

240.—To Frau von Laroche.

21 March, 1775.

Brentano† has shown me her [Max's] daily letters to him. The little wife is well, and I hope that the friendship and confidence which the husband has hitherto shown me may be undissembled; I believe it at least, and so I hope that in future I may cause no more vexation to the little one, and perhaps a pleasant hour now and then. Tell her that, with my heartiest greeting. I strive and work daily to become better, and have, thank God, lighted on fresh *relais* of horses for my further route. Good-bye, dear Mama, and now one more request; last summer I gave to Von Buri,‡ in Neuwied, some poems, which he withholds from me. This annoys me. I have written

* Probably *Clavigo*.
† It appears that Goethe had now reconciled himself to Brentano.
‡ See note, Letter 1.

to him; he has told me through a third person that he will send them to me by Madame L. R. Please, please, dear Mama, get them for me.

What ought I to have received last Friday? Many greetings to Herr v. Hohenfeld!

Good-bye, dear Mama.

G.

241.*—To Herder.

25th March, 1775.

Here, dear Brother, is a grand Fûssli-letter † from Lavater. What violence and rancour there is in mankind. Hamann's 'Prolegomena' have done much for what, *implicite*, is strength in me. Send me something, write me something of yourself, whatever it may be! Were it a cast-off curl-paper—and especially a silhouette of your boy. It looks as if the threads by which my fate hangs, and which I have already so long shaken backwards and forwards in rotatory oscillation, would at last unite. Otherwise, general circumstances make me tolerably tame, without, however, taking from me the good courage of youth. Caroline, dear Sister, good morning.

Goethe.

242.—To Frau von Laroche.

28 March, 1775.

Here, dear Mama, is a Klyjoch,‡ which will give you much pleasure. The drawing of Herr v. Hohenfeld

* A letter to Auguste Stolberg asking for silhouettes of her brothers, etc., the same date as this, is omitted. See S. Hirzel, vol. iii., p. 74.

† i.e. from Henry Fuseli, the English Royal Academician who took a great interest in Lavaters work.

‡ A misspelling of the Swiss name *Chli Jogg*, *Klein* (little) *Jacob*, the pseudonym of a Swiss peasant, Jacob Gujer, of Canton Zürich, who was at this time brought into notoriety. Though a respectable man of considerable natural sense, he can hardly have deserved the great fame which he obtained through the patronage of a physician of Zürich, who devoted more than one volume to the praise of this "peasant philosopher;" or, as he was called in a French translation of one of these books, *Le Socrate rustique*. Goethe, like many other people of good education, and some of high rank, was at first very enthusiastic about him. He here refers, probably, to one of the volumes of the above-mentioned physician, Hans Caspar Hirzel. See Frese, p. 162.

will be ten times as valuable to me, only I beg you, by all that is holy, that when you send it me it may be protected most carefully, for however careless I am in general, a crease in such a thing makes me furious. Good-bye to you and the dear wife. I have kept my word hitherto, I have kept my word to her hitherto, and promised her when her heart should incline to her husband, I would again return. I shall again be there and remain till my life's end, while she remains spouse, housewife and mother. Amen.

G.

243.—To P. E. Reich.*

Frankfort, 28 March, 1775.

I beg you, dear Herr Reich, to tell me when convenient, how long I have until I need again send any manuscript; the reason is this—all is now out of Lavater's hands and ready with me, but I should still like to make a few additions, which in fact I have begun. In the meantime, if it *must be*, all can go off to you at an hour's notice. Farewell.

G.

244.—To Lavater.

Here is the journal. I would rather not have inserted anything. But as for once it was to be, I think I have hit the right tone. You may imagine what an effect the information you sent me about the public of this place would have on me. I hope the matter will now rest, and for the future I beg you to be less sensitive. As long as you live and work, you will not escape being misunderstood; to that you must resign yourself once for all. And in fact you need only speak hastily with a friend in the street, and the indifferent spectators from the first-floor windows make their comments thereupon. Be silent.

G.

* Dated May 28 by O. Jahn. Hirzel's date is as above, and seems, from a comparison with other short notes which Jahn prints referring to the proof-sheets of Lavater's book, to be the more probable.

245.—To J. Fahlmer.*

[29 March, 1775.]

Here is Erwin, and Klopstock is here!—— If you will oblige me, then, have yourself conveyed to us at three. You will meet him here.

G.

246.—To Herder.

1 April, 1775.

Dear Brother, Write to me sometimes, crossly or kindly, about everything and nothing! Look, whilst the world is so full of [rascals], ought we to quarrel?

Why am I always writing this? a little book is put into my hand after dinner, Prof. Meiner's Essay, 'The Egyptians.' "He!" say I, and turn over the leaves, where does Brother Herder appear then?—for I think it is a likely occasion! more or less. But I actually find you not, either for good nor evil—the most cursed hog-wash about Lake Moeris, and travestied funeral rites of the Egyptians, &c., &c., &c., &c., and then Orpheus! &c. &c., and at the end, after X.Y.Z., &c., your name too: and smart in silken cloak and collar, a pert bow to you, *that he also*, &c. Adieu, Brother! Fräul. Hess has sent me the letter of the Swiss Peasant.† Klopstock was with me the day before yesterday, he is going to Hamburg. I saw Merck too in Langen three days ago.

Greet your wife.

Goethe.

247.—To J. Fahlmer.

[Beginning of April, 1775.]

I thank you, dear Aunt, for the letter from Fritz—he is dear and good as ever—but I have not written to him yet, I will not write to anybody on the subject.

* A note by hand. Klopstock had left and was at Göttingen by 3rd April. Urlichs, p. 74.

† See note, p. 233.

Neither shall I give myself any trouble about the author,* nor help to put you on the track. The public may think what it likes of me—the clincher with which Wieland's letter ends avails him nothing. I have laughed over a great part of his epistle, and turn up my nose at the end. I was sorry yesterday not to meet you. Adieu, greet Fritz and ask him for Fr. ballads.†

(Send it back to F.)

G.

248.—To J. Fahlmer.

[Before 9th April, 1775.]

I said it indeed, dear Aunt! It is Gospel truth.‡ About the printing we will speak further. Yes, Aunt, she was beautiful as an angel,§ and I had not seen her for four days. And, dear God, how much better she is than beautiful.

G.

249.—To J. Fahlmer.

[10th April, 1775.]

A good word finds a good place. I went home at once, however, and disinterred Claudine.‖ That for your information, herewith is the Ode. How do I please you on slender prophetic stilts, admonishing Princes and Lords as to their duty?¶

G.

* This refers to a farce, by H. L. Wagner, of Strasbourg, entitled *Prometheus, Deucalion, and his Reviewers*, which was generally ascribed to Goethe. It appears to have offended Wieland, on which account Goethe shortly afterwards took occasion to repudiate its authorship in the *Frankfurter Gelehrt. Anzeigen*. See Letter 251, and Urlichs, p. 75. Wagner was two years older than Goethe, and is described by Düntzer as a poet of more facility than originality. See *G.'s Leben*, p. 225.

† Probably, French popular ballads such as those referred to *above*, Letter 149 and note ‡, p. 162.

‡ Again referring to Wagner's farce. § i.e. Lili.

‖ His play, or operetta, *Claudine von Villa Bella*.

¶ Urlichs applies this to the poem, *Gränzen der Menschheit*.

250.—To C. L. von Knebel.

Frankfort, 14 April, 1775.

I do not know to where I ought to send a word to you. Item, let it go. Do you still love me? and think of me? I!—fall out of one perplexity into another, and am really standing again unsuspecting with my poor heart in full sympathy with the fate of mankind, from which I had just rescued myself with difficulty. Klopstock found me in strange agitation. I only had a sip of the dear man. I have been doing all sorts of things and yet little. I shall soon have a play ready. I am carrying on the citizens' affairs as gently and quietly as if I were carrying on a smuggling trade, and am otherwise ever the same that you know. And now write to me much about yourself. As to the dear Duke, remember me lovingly to him. Adieu. Adieu.

G.

251—To Klopstock.

[Frankfort], 15th April, 1775.

Here, dear Father, is a little word to the public, I set about it unwillingly, but it must be.

I am still pretty much in the position in which you left me, only that it is sometimes worse, and then a dewdrop of the universal balsam again falls on me from above, which makes all good again. I occupy myself as much as I can and that does something. However I divine well that each one must drink up his cup, and so *fiat voluntas.* Remember me among your dear ones.

A letter from Frau v. Winthern will have got back [to you] again. Write me a few words about your journey.

N. B. The Wagner, of whom the leaflet speaks, is the very person whom you saw for a moment in the morning in my room. He is long, lean. You were standing near the stove.*

Goethe.

* Probably on his recent visit. See Letter 245.

GOETHE'S EXPLANATION TO THE PUBLIC.

IT is not I, but Henry Leopold Wagner, who wrote and printed the 'Prometheus' without my co-operation, without my knowledge. It was a riddle to me, as well as to my friends and the public, who could so have imitated the manner in which I am accustomed sometimes to make fun, and who could be informed of certain anecdotes, before the author discovered himself to me a few days ago. I believe this explanation to be due to those who love me and trust my word. Furthermore, I have been very glad on this occasion quietly to become better acquainted with divers persons by their behaviour towards me.

GOETHE.

Frankfort, 9th April, 1775.

252.—To J. FAHLMER.

[April, 1775.]

YOU are very kind. I have kept back my answer to Fritz, for it was really mysterious. However, the clear and decisive does nothing too; it is water without baptism. Whoever drinks thereof will thirst again. So let it pass; I could well be wild with Fritz, but never angry. Adieu.

Here is 'Prometheus.'* Still the stream goes pleasantly with me—but I help it a little at the rudder too.

253.—To LAVATER.

[19 April, 1775.]

LAY OF THE PHYSIOGNOMICAL DRAUGHTSMAN.

Oh, that creative power of thought
  Within my mind abode,
That forming force with vigour fraught
  From out my fingers flowed!

* Probably the short Ode on *Prometheus*.

I stammer only, only quail,
  Yet cannot let it be,
O Nature! thee I know, I feel,
  So must I grasp at thee.

When I recall how years have past
  Since sense began to grow,
How he, where was an arid waste,
  Now sees a joy-spring flow,
Then, Nature, whole and all, to thee
  Benign and free, I cling;
A joyous well-spring, thou to me
  On thousand reeds wilt sing,
Thy forces all within my mind
  Wilt quicken and make free,
And open out this being confined,
  For all eternity.

THAT you may see, Brother, I am glad to do what I can, here you have, my dear fellow, your chapters [*Capitels*] back with interest; they have been copied and sent to Gotter. I think it is best so; if you are satisfied with what I write there, I will go on. For I must keep to my style; it will not do to mix yours and mine; but thus, one after the other, it may have its effect. Do not excite yourself too much, and manage so that it assumes a seemly arrangement. Above all, I should like to look over the whole once more before it is printed, for I already perceive that it will ultimately go from the writing-table to the press. Let it go as it will, I am ready.

254.—To J. FAHLMER.

[Sunday morning, 23rd April, 1775.]

I DON'T understand a word of it, dearest Aunt—not a word. Good God! it is a nice state of things for us, very nice—and yet it seems to me like a ray of light, that Fritz is coming—so utterly unexpectedly. What can, what must I say! I do not remember his last note. We must now wait,

I suppose. I feel what is passing in you—Adieu. Must it not be an old letter from the last time—left lying at Mainz?

255.*—To Countess Auguste zu Stolberg.

[15–26 April, 1775.]

Here, my best one, is a little song from me, to which I have had a melody of Grétry's adapted! Ah, God! your brothers, our brothers, are coming to me! . . . .

You will receive your shadow likeness, but I must have a new one of you, large.

Give a look at the second volume of *Iris* when you come across it, there are all sorts of things by me in it.

I often think of you.

When I am gayer again, you shall have your share of it, only do not let my letters be hateful to you, as I am to myself whilst I write. I fancy all the wrinkles in my face are impressed therein. Adieu! Adieu! Best one.

15th April.

How I am waiting for our brothers!† What a dear letter from you three. Here are the shadow likenesses. They are not all equally good, but all cut with a feeling hand. Not another word for this time. Keep me in your heart.

G.

26th April, 1775.

256.—To Herder.

[Frankfort, May, 1775.]

It is with me as with you, dear Brother, I play up my balls against the wall, and shuttle-cocks with the women. I fancied a short time ago that I was coming nearer to the haven of domestic bliss, and sure footing in

* Abridged in translation. Hirzel, vol. iii. p. 80.

† The two Counts Stolberg, with whom he shortly went to Switzerland.

the true sorrow and joy of the earth, but am again in a grievous way cast out into the wide sea.

Hearty thanks for your boy's shadow-likeness! It is quite your face!—quite! quite! in unbelieving determination. I am helping on Lavater's 'Physiognomy' with cordial Shandyism. I have managed to get your books, and refreshed myself therewith. God knows that it is a world felt. An animated heap of sweepings! And so thanks! thanks!——

I have been obliged to make all the pages full of lines; in order to indicate transition. and yet—— If only the whole doctrine about Christ were not such a pretence, that it makes me, as a man, as a limited needy creature, furious, the Subject would be dear to me. God or Devil so dealt with becomes dear to me, for he is my Brother—and so I feel in all your being, not the shell and covering, from which your Castors or Harlequins creep out, but the everlastingly equal brother, man, God, worm and fool. Your way of sweeping, and not even sifting gold out of the dust, but making the dust serve for the palingenesis of living plants, always sets me on the knees of my heart. Adieu. I am going away in a short time to my sister. Adieu. Greet your little wife. I dance away my life on the tight-rope, called *fatum congenitum*. You shall shortly see some of my fresco-painting, when you will be angry at seeing well-felt nature beside frightful *locus communis*. *Fiat voluntas*.

GOETHE.

257.—To Frau von Laroche.

13 May, 1775.

At last I have reconciled my mind to it, and am going from Frankfort to my sister. Thus, through Mannheim, Carlsruhe, and Strasbourg. Thank you for your last letter and offer. I now communicate with Lenz myself, and perhaps more from there. Your Letters are splendid. Good-bye, and to the little wife everything hearty! Then when I return, I shall meet her.

G.

258.—To J. Fahlmer.

[16 May, 1775.]

I am in Mannheim,* dear Aunt, and I am mad enough. You must write to me, at Strasbourg, addressed to Actuary Salzmann. And when 'Erwin' is performed, I beg for an account of it. For there is a farce, yet—— And whether Lili was there? and anything else. Greet Fritz. Adieu. Tuesday.

G.

259.—To J. Fahlmer.

[Strasbourg, 22nd May, 1775.]

Hearty thanks, dear Aunt, for the news of the splendid acting, and for your last, with the things. I am a good deal in the open air. Sleeping, eating, drinking, bathing, riding, driving, have been for a few days back the blessed contents of my life. Your letter gave us all much pleasure; you have felt very keenly and described very dramatically. It was better to me than the representation itself. I am going to Schaffhausen to see the Rhine-falls, to envelope myself in the great idea. For as yet I feel that the chief aim of my journey has failed, and if I return it will be worse with the Bear † than before. I know very well I am a fool, but for this reason I am so—— And why should the little lamp be extinguished which shines and glimmers so nicely before one on the way through life. Adieu, Aunt. Greet Fritz. Whit-Monday. Write to me at Emmendingen; tell Mama too that everything is to be sent to me here until I counterorder.

Greet Max very kindly for me.

G.

* He had now started on the tour which he took with the two Counts Stolberg and Haugwitz. See *Autobiog.*, bk. xviii.

† The Bear was the character assigned to himself in his poem *Lili's Park*. His chief aim was, of course, to forget her.

260.—To J. Fahlmer.

In the open air! In a primeval avenue of high interlacing lime-trees, a meadow between, and the minster beyond! Yonder the Ill. And Lenz this moment hastens to town. I have already ordered dinner near by here, and so on, he is coming back, &c. Thank you for the letter, I hope for another! I hope for the representation of 'Erwin'—not a word as to author!—You are good, dear Aunt, and so is Heaven! These old places, now again so new! The past and the future! Well, well, on the road [K. met me] * unexpected, but dearer, fuller, more perfect than in anticipation; good and bad men true in their way. Louise † is an angel, the brilliant star could not withhold me from picking up a few flowers which fell from her bosom, and which I keep in the breast-pocket near my heart. Weimar also came and is kind to me. The rest by word of mouth! Everything is better than I thought. Perhaps because I love I find everything lovable and good.

So much for this time from the escaped bear,‡ about the fugitive cats! I have seen much, much. The world is a grand book from which to become wiser, if only something helps. Greet Fritz a thousand times! Mama la Roche who will, I suppose, be with you! Max! My Father and Mother!

Wednesday, 24th May, 1775—a quarter of a league from Strasbourg.

G.

[*In ink.*]

The devil take me, Aunt; it is Friday, the twenty-sixth, and I am still at Strasbourg. To-morrow, however, I go to Emmendingen.§ It is all mad and wonderful to me wherever I am. Adieu, best Aunt, I shall probably find your letters at Emmendingen.

* The letter, which is written in pencil, is here illegible. He probably refers to Von Knebel and the Weimar party.

† The Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt, the destined bride of Karl August, Duke of Saxe-Weimar. Goethe and the Stolbergs visited the Court at Karlsruhe.

‡ See note to preceding letter.

§ His sister's home. He stayed there from the 27th May to 5th June.

261.—To C. L. von Knebel.

Emmendingen, 4th June, 1775.

I send you with this, dear Knebel, 'Claudine;' read it to our Duke at leisure hours, and then please send it back again here to my sister by the mail-coach. Not to be copied I beg, please. Thank you for your note. I am heartily glad that you are not alienated from me. To his Serene Highness everything heartfelt from me. Addio. To-morrow I am going to Schaffhausen, if fortune favours.

G.

262.—To J. Fahlmer.

7th June, 1775.

Here, dear Aunt, are a few glimpses into the open world. I am writing this at Schaffhausen at the "Sword."

I am now going out to see the Rhine-falls. To-morrow at this time I shall be with Lavater. I am very well. If only I could get quite deep into the world. But I suppose I shall very shortly be with you again.*

G.

263.—To Charlotte Kestner.

19 June, 1775.

In the heart of Switzerland, at the place where Tell shot the apple from the head of his boy; why, from there in particular [do I write] a few words to you when I have been so long silent?

Dear, good Lotte, one peep at you and your little ones, and your dear husband, from out of all this glorious nature, amidst the noble race which cannot be quite unworthy of its fathers, though there are men too here and there.

* This letter is written in pencil, and contains a drawing of Goethe sitting at a table in the street, with a landscape in the background.—U.

I can tell nothing, describe nothing. Perhaps I shall tell more when it is far from me, as has been the case with me before, I dare say, in matters dear to me. You still love me a little, don't you? Continue to do so, and kiss your husband also for me, and your little ones. Adieu. Greet the Meyers heartily. Altdorf, three leagues from Gothard, which I ascend to-morrow.

264.—To Frau von Laroche.

[Zurich], at Lavater's desk, June, 1775.

I am come from Klyjoch,* where I have been with Lavater, Stolberg, Haugwitz, and other good young fellows. [To show] that I thought of you there, here is a piece of bread cut at his table. "One can cut† merrily when one sees there is plenty of it," he said, of course in his tone and speech. I went from here without an idea of him, and return rich and well-content. I have met with no ideal descended from the clouds,‡ God be thanked, but one of the most splendid creatures, such as this earth produces, from which we also have sprung. Good-bye! Good-bye! And you at Frankfort just when I go away from it! Many greetings to Max.

G.

† For "cut" they say "chop" [*hauen*]. "Chop off a piece of bread."
‡ N.B. No *moral-philosophical* peasant.

265.—To Frau von Laroche.

[Frankfort], 27 July, 1775.

I have been here again for some days. I met Herder in Darmstadt, and came over with him and his little wife. You are coming soon, and even if you were not to come, I must reserve for word of mouth what adventures were experienced on the way. I did not find Herr v. Hohenfeld at Spires. It is well for me that I know a country like Switzerland; now, let come what may to me, I have always a place of refuge there.

* See note †, p. 233, *above*.

I have seen Max, with her dear little one; she had a good deal of intercourse with my mother in my absence. How it will go now, God knows! Brentano is not jealous, *he says.*

Has Crespel* shown himself a true knight? Do not fail to come to us still. The 26th. Another good-morning, this the 27th July, 1775.

G.

266.—To Countess Auguste zu Stolberg.

25[-31] July, 1775.

I am again in Frankfort, I parted from our brothers in Zurich; yet it was hard for us. "I can well believe it," Gustchen will say. Fritz,† my love, is now at Wolckenbad, and the good spirit who hovers round us all will pour healing balm into his soul. I suffered with him, and could not do the same. I beg you—yet let me say nothing about it now—and who can speak of it. I was present when the last news came. It was at Strasbourg.

Good-night, angel sister. A hearty greeting to the Countess Bernsdorf.

267.—To Frau von Laroche

[Frankfort], 1 Aug. 1775.

Yesterday evening, dear Mama, we fiddled and tootled at good Max's. Thank you for your letter, and for the first through Falmer, I received it duly. Here are your Letters returned with thanks. *Blank paper* is ever a friendly resource; in the moment of necessity, a true, sympathizing friend, who does not repel us by any clumsy angles of character, such as we often experience at the very moment when we would least wish to be so affected.

That you like my 'Stella' so is infinitely prized by me, let Fritz give it you. It is not a piece for everybody.

How do you stand with Lenz? I know nothing about it, he has not let me see your letters; it seems to me as if

* Rath Crespel, a friend of the Goethe family: he lived later in Ratisbon.—F.

† Fritz Leopold was the younger of the two Counts Stolberg.

you did not get on very well with the little original. He rolls his little tub with much fervour and sincerity. Adieu.

Greet Herr v. Hohenfeld! Remembrances from Crespel, who heartily loves and esteems you. Write to me soon.

G.

268.—To C. L. von Knebel.

Frankfort, 1st August, 1775.

How are you, dear Knebel, I should like to hear a word about you and our Duke. I am here again, have made a pilgrimage through the dear, sacred Swiss-German nation, and am a good deal better, and quite contented with the past and full of hope for the future. Send me back 'Claudine' and keep me in your affection.

G.

269.*—To Countess Auguste zu Stolberg.

[Offenbach], 3rd Aug.

One word that my heart may be free, only one hand-clasp. I can say nothing to you. Here!—How shall I name *here* to you! † Before this pretty straw writing-case—where delicate little notes should be written; and yet these tears and this oppression! What discord. O that I could tell you all! Here in the room of the girl who makes me unhappy, by no fault of hers, with the soul of an angel, whose bright days I trouble—I! A quarter of an hour ago I took your letter out of my pocket; I read it! Of 2nd June! and you beg, beg for an answer, for a word from my heart. And to-day is the 3rd August, and I have not yet written. . . . And how can I speak of Fritz, of you, since in his misery I have often indeed wept for my own. . . . He is better off than I. In vain for three months have I wandered about in the open air, absorbing a thousand new objects in all my senses. Angel, and I am sitting again in Offenbach, become as simple as a child, as confined as a parrot on the perch. . . .

* Hirzel, iii., p. 93. Abridged in translation.

† He was again at D'Orville's house at Offenbach, and, as it appears, in the room occupied by Lili.

At night, on the terrace by the Maine, I look across and think of you! So far! So far! And then you and Fritz, and I! and everything entangles itself in a snaky knot! and I find no atmosphere for writing. . . .

Here flows the Maine, just opposite lies Bergen, on a hill behind corn-fields. You have heard no doubt of the battle at Bergen.* On the left there beneath it lies grey Frankfort with the clumsy tower, which for me is now as empty as if swept with brooms;† up on the right there are pretty villages, the garden below, the terrace on the Maine just beneath. And here on the table a pocket-handkerchief, a basket, a necktie yonder, there hang the dear girl's boots. N.B. To-day we are going to ride. . . . I hear her voice—I may stay, she will get ready in the next room. . . . I have described to you how it all looks around me, in order to drive away the spirits by the sense of sight. Lili was surprised to find me here; they had missed me. She asked to whom I was writing. I told her.

Adieu, Gustchen. Greet the Countess Bernsdorf. Write to me. Your brothers will have sent you the silhouette. Lavater has had the four Heumann children engraved very successfully.

THE RESTLESS ONE.

For God's sake let no one see my letters! ‡

270.—TO LAVATER.

[Aug. 3–4.]

LOUISE'S § portrait, by Melling, which I have in hand for you, you shall very shortly receive. I have written to her. The poem to her is the best you have

* During the Seven Years War, 13 April, 1759; Goethe himself saw something of this battle. See *Autobiog.*, bk. iii.

† Comp. *Hermann u. D.*, line 2.

‡ This postscript will explain the abridgment of some of these letters, which seem greatly overestimated by some German critics.

§ The Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt who married the Duke of Weimar. The second volume of Lavater's Physiognomical work is dedicated to her; and her portrait is given at vol. iii., p. 327.

ever made. A few more cold baths, and some Roborantia and you are a brother not to be improved on.

God bless your boy, your wife and all. My father compliments her upon her confinement. Take it in a friendly way.

Send Stella straight to Lenz. Or let Pass[avant] look after it. Something for the Physiognomy directly. Send me something too. I am at Offenbach, where, of course, Lili is. I have greeted her for you. I shall very soon send you her silhouette as a woman. Do something for her in verse that will strengthen and keep her in goodness. You can do good, and you are willing to do it.

4 August.

YESTERDAY we went out riding. Lili, D'Orville and I. You should have seen the angel in her riding-habit on horseback.

The rest of the party waited for us in Oberrad, and a storm drove the old Princess of Waldeck and her daughter, the Duchess of Courland, and the Princess of Usingen into our house and drawing-room. As soon as they recognised me they asked me a great deal about you, and the old Princess spoke with so much sincerity and warmth about you that it did me good. She said: If his ears do not tingle to-day, I do not think much of his power of divination, the fault is not ours. She sends you a hearty greeting.

Lili greets you too!

And God will be gracious to me. N.B. For some time since I have been pious again, my desire is for the Lord, and I sing him psalms of which you shall very soon have a vibration. I am very much strained, I might almost say *over*-[strained], but I wish you were with me for then my neighbourhood is good.

How is the catalogue of the sermons getting on? Send me soon a dozen little books with texts and themes indicated.

Write out what you wish me to see for you if I go to Italy. G.

271.—To Madame Karsch * at Berlin.

[Offenbach-on-Maine, 17 Aug. 1775.]

I wander about the country, dear lady, to enjoy in the open air the sorrow and joy which God has given to young hearts for their portion. I lately ran up to town once, and Griesbach brought me your letter. It has given me cordial delight that you let your pen so run on to me; and now I thank you for your greeting and friendliness. I wished that your daughter † had written to me also, howsoever and whensoever it came into her mind, for no looking-glass of vanity is such a mirror as a letter from the soul oppressed by extraordinary conditions when it hears harmony therein, and tired of the eternal solo pauses with joy and gains new delight by listening to the friendly fellow-player.

Write often to me something on the spur of the moment, everything is dear and precious to me which comes true and strong from the heart, whether in other respects it looks like a hedgehog or a cupid. I have written of *all sorts*, in a certain sense *little*, in reality *nothing*. We draw the foam from the great river of humanity with our quills and imagine to ourselves that we have caught floating islands at least.

The whole circulation of my small individuality has gained much from my journey in Switzerland. Perhaps the invisible scourge of the Eumenides will drive me again from my Fatherland, probably not northwards, though I would gladly greet Lot and his household some day in your Sodom. Addio.

P.S. The theme of the slovenliness of human beings under certain circumstances I cannot and may not discuss to-day. The causes lie on the writing-table here, on the coffee-table there, and the figure in *negligée* who turns

* Anna Louisa Karsch was a minor poetess of the Gleim circle. Her chief merit is that her talent was developed in the most humble and depressing circumstances, and without any literary cultivation. Düntzer calls her a "Nature's poetess."

† Baroness Klencke, who inherited some of her mother's poetic talent.

her back towards me, and swallows her breakfast. Holy Yorick! if only thou wouldst look down from thy Heaven and represent in a dream to the good Madame Karsch the rational, cordial character of this nonsense, for thou alone wouldst have had head and heart therefor—only one classical passage by way of explanation. "Les gens amoureux," says the too-wise spouse of the incomparable Shah Baham—"ne dorment guère, à moins qu'ils ne soient favorisés."

This letter has remained lying until 28th August. Now once more good morning and adieu.

G.

Frankfort.

272.—To J. H. Merck.

[Frankfort, August 1775.]

Jung has gone back to Elberfeld and greets you. What are you doing? How is your wife getting on in her confinement, and will the conference soon take place?

I am again foully stranded and could cuff my own head a thousand times, for not having gone to the devil whilst I was afloat. I am on the watch again for a fresh opportunity of printing, only I should like to know whether in that case you could supply me with a little money, only for the first start.

In any case you may clearly point out to my father at the approaching conference, that he must send me to Italy in the spring; that is, at the end of this year I must be off. I can scarcely endure until then, gondoliring about on this pond, and preparing with great festivity for the frog and spider hunt. Have you written about my MSS.? Adieu! Draw and send. You shall have all your things back. Amen.

273.—To J. Fahlmer.

[End of August 1775.]

Read this, Aunt, then on with it to Fritz. It is from Lenz! * I, an *uncle*, am creeping about in the swaddling

* The packet also contained some poems of Goethe's for the *Iris*; amongst them the *Herbstgefühl*. See Urlichs, p. 89.

clothes of all my powers and capacities, and am externally somewhat rough, &c. Farewell. I am drawing, touching up, &c. And live entirely with Rembrandt.*

G.

274.—To Lavater.

[Frankfort, Aug. 1775.]

What has become of Zimmermann?† Where is he now? When he comes back he is to live with me. Do not forget to write that to him. Ask Herr Schutz for a few silhouettes of my phiz, and send them at your convenience. Have you thought about the Physiognomy and will you soon send me something? Here is something about the silhouettes of Frau v. Stein and the Marchese Branconi.‡ Look them out at once and lay them side by side with this.

Stein.	Branconi.
Firmness.	Enterprising strength.
Amiable and unchanging continuance of the object.	Acute, but not deep, thought.
Self-satisfaction.	Pure vanity.
Affectionate amiability.	Refined exacting politeness.
Innocence and goodness; self-sustaining conversation.	Wit, cultivated language, choice in expression.
Indulgent firmness.	Opposition.
Goodwill.	Feeling for herself.
Faithful.	Grasping and retaining.
Vanquishing with nets.§	Vanquishing with darts.

I wish you would leave them and Frau v. Löw to me for the second part, they must be engraved as clearly as possible. I would comment on them and send you them for annotation and only then make a connected whole out of them. So it must be, at all events, with the whole of

* There is a drawing after Rembrandt in Lavater's 'Physiog.' iii. 14, chiefly by Goethe.—U.

† The well-known physician and writer on *Solitude*.

‡ A friend of Lavater and Zimmermann.

§ This and the corresponding quality in the other character are of course metaphors from the Roman amphitheatre.

the second part. But you, *Waverer*, I beg you to suppress the family plate of us; it is horrible. You stultify yourself and us. Let my father be cut out and use him as a vignette, he is good. I earnestly beg this. With my head do what you like, only my mother must not be left there. If you have still a few copies, send me them with those for which I ask you in the enclosed note, it is in order to cut out the father.

If the drawings of Fuseli which you gave to me are found send them too. Thanks for the Chodowiecki and the others.

Here are lines of Fettmilch's head. The blunt and obstinate is marked more strongly on the bad paper on which it is taken, and it has at the same time something low and brutal which the sketch has not.

What do you think of the idea? It would be grand to carry it out in silhouettes.

You know Hogarth's line of beauty from distortion to lifelessness. The fair point of the line of beauty is the line of love. Strength and weakness stand on either side of it. Love is the point in which they unite. Give me some additions to it and we will make a nice little chapter. Perhaps no altogether impure thread drawn out of the great web.

275.—To J. Fahlmer.

[August 1775.]

Here is Fritz's work; I should not like it to be printed, and yet there are such good things in it.*

And I—— The Intricacies of Diego and Julia. Part I.†—always speak in the deepest constraint with me and my ass, whilst a whole small world busies itself about me. Amen.

G.

(Send it to F. again.)

* A novel by Jacobi, 'Edward Alwill's Papers.'

† A ref rence to 'Tristram Shandy,' which had been recently transated by Bode. See vol. iv. ch. i.

276.—To J. Fahlmer.

[11 September, 1775.]

I am just come from Offenbach! I can give you neither look nor feature of the household. My heart is just like a stocking, the outside in, the innerside out. Pray pray! look about you at the Fair,* for something—for Lili!!!! Finery, Jewellery, the most fashionable, the most elegant. You only understand it, and my love as well. But this is sacred between us, Mama must know nothing of it. Nor the Gerocks. I pray. And write what it costs!!!!"

277.—To Frau von Laroche.

15 Sept. [1775.]

To-day will go your open-hearted letters, they are written right well; here and there he makes exaggerated pretensions, like all spectators who have not to stretch their backs over it themselves.

Kalckhof has written me a very gracious letter and invited me in the name of their Excellencies,† to Dieburg. Groschlag was here yesterday but I was not able to get to him.

I have had two long talks lately with dear Max. She is well, and reconciles herself to circumstances with much composure. I am glad that my verses are right. Whether they are understood or sympathised with is not the question, a scrap of paper, black on white, and a gilt edge, that is the way to do it, but Herr v. H[ohenfeld's] sympathy is very dear to me.

Greet Lisel and my little ones for me. The Trossons must remember me and also the Desters.

The Dean ‡ is building and papering.

* There was a fair at Frankfort in the autumn (beginning Sept. 10) as well as in the spring.

† The newly-married Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Weimar.

‡ Dumeitz. See note, p. 171.

My sister is still in Emendingen.
Herder has a boy.
Dester and Gretel I have met once.
Merck is happy and I busy without being industrious, but I am getting on. Good-bye.

G.

278. - To Auguste Countess Stolberg.*

[14–19 Sept.]

I have begun forthwith on 14th September at the moment of finishing your letter; you see how high up and how small, how much I intend to write. To-day I am at peace; yet indeed, there lies generally one snake in the grass. Listen, I have an abiding presentiment that you will save me, in some dire distress, and no other created woman can but you. I thank you first of all for your vivid description of all about you, if I only had, now, a silhouette of your whole figure! Could I but come! . . . . . What you say about Lili is quite true. Unluckily distance makes the bonds still firmer that bewitch me to her. I cannot, I must not tell you all. It touches me too closely. I must have no reminiscences, angel! Your letter has sounded in my ears again like the trumpet to the sleeping warrior. Would to God that your eyes were Ubald's shield to me, and let me deeply recognise my unworthy misery. . . .

After dinner. Your good word worked in me, then suddenly there was a voice within me: it cannot be overweening pride to desire that the girl should know you perfectly and so knowing, love you. Maybe, too, I do not know her, and since she is different from me, is she not, probably, better. Let my silence tell you what no words can say. . . .

15th. Good-morning. I have had a good night. . . . You will not guess what is occupying me. A masque next Tuesday, when we have a ball. . . . .

* Abridged in translation. Hirzel, iii. 103.

And my masque is to be an old German costume, black and yellow, pantaloons, short doublet, mantle and turned up hat and feather.

Ah, how I thank God for giving me this puppet for a few days, if it lasts so long.

Half-past three. Fallen through, as I suspected. My masque will not be made. Lili is not going to the ball. But may I, can I tell you all! I did it in her honour because I am declared as hers and a girl's heart, &c. So, Gustchen—I did it half out of spite, because we have not been on a particularly good footing this last week. . .

Half-past 4. I wish I could picture myself to you as I am, you would then see your wonder. Good Heavens! In such everlasting change always just the same.

16th. Last night half deadly dreams tormented me. They haunted me when I awoke early this morning. But as I saw the sun, I jumped out of bed on both feet, ran up and down the room, my heart beat so cheerfully, cheerfully, and was so light, and an assurance came to me that I was saved, that something would yet be made of me. . . . .

Half-past three in the afternoon. The morning was open and fine, and I did something to give Lili a little pleasure; saw visitors, wandered about after dinner playing the fool among friends and strangers. I am now going to Offenbach, in order not to see Lili at the play this evening nor at the concert to-morrow. I put up the sheet and will go on writing from there.

Offenbach! Seven in the evening. Amid a set of people who are very fond of me, often sympathize with me! It is so now! I am again sitting at the little writing-table, from which I wrote to you before I went to Switzerland. . . . . Adieu for to-day. It is night and the Maine still twinkles from between the dark banks.

Offenbach. Sunday 17th, 10 o'clock at night.—The day has gone by indifferent and dull. When I got up I felt

well, wrote a scene of my 'Faust,' passed a few hours idly, made love a little to a girl, of whom your brothers could tell you; she is a singular creature. Dined in company with a dozen good young fellows, who are just what God made them. Rowed by myself up and down on the water, I have a whim to learn to row myself. Played at faro an hour or two, and dreamed away a few with good people. And now I sit down to say good-night to you. Through all this, I was like a rat who has eaten poison, it runs into every hole, gulps down everything moist, swallows everything eatable that comes in its way, whilst its inside burns with inextinguishable destroying fire. A week ago to-day Lili was here. And at that time I was in the fearfullest, gayest, sweetest state in all my life (I might say). O, Gustchen, why can I not tell anything about it! Why? How I looked at the moon and world through the hottest tears of love, and everything blissful surrounded me. And in the distance the forest-horn and the noisy glee of the wedding guests. Gustchen, since the storm I am—not at rest but quiet—quiet for me, and only fear another tempest, which is ever gathering in the most peaceful days, and—Good-night, Angel. . . .

Monday 18th.—My little boat is ready and I am going at once to steer it below. A splendid morning, the mist has dispersed, everything bright and fine around! And I am going back into town, to the sieve of the Danaïdes again. Adieu.

I have a fine bright morning! O Gustchen! Will my heart at last feel some day in thrilling, true delight and sorrow the blessedness which has been granted to men and not be driven about for ever between Heaven and Hell on the waves of imagination and overstrained sensibility. Best one, I beg you to write me also a diary like this. That is the only thing which overcomes the perpetual distance.

Monday-night, half-past 11.—Frankfort, at my table. I come once more to say good-night to you. I have hurried and raved until now. To-morrow it will be still

worse. O dearest, what is the life of man! And yet again the manifold good which gathers round me! the manifold love which surrounds me. . . . . I saw Lili to-day after dinner, saw her at the play. I had not a word to say to her—and said nothing!—Would I were free of it. Oh, Gustchen, and yet I tremble for the moment when she could be indifferent to me, and I become hopeless! But I remain true to my heart, and let things take their course. As they will.

279.—To Auguste Countess Stolberg.

[20 Sept.-22 Nov.]

Begun again Wednesday 20th whether to be torn up or otherwise! Enough, I begin. At the ball till six o'clock to-day, only danced two minuets, kept in the company of a sweet girl, who had a cough.—If I could tell you my present relations to several dear and noble womanly souls! if I could tell you vividly! No, if I could, I would not, you would not get through it. Nor I either, if everything came in one rush, and Nature did not let us swallow a few grains of forgetfulness in her daily economy. Now it is close upon eight o'clock at night. I slept until one, ate, looked after something, dressed, presented myself at the Prince of Meiningen's, went to the door of the theatre. Said seven words to Lili. And am now here. Adieu.

Thursday, 21st.—I have taken it into my head to dress myself well to-day. I am awaiting a new coat from the tailor which I have had embroidered in Lyons—grey with blue embroidery—with greater impatience than the acquaintance of a man of genius, who has announced a visit to me at this very hour. Something has gone wrong already. My hairdresser did my hair for an hour, and when he was gone I pulled it down and sent for another, whom I am also waiting for.——

Saturday 23rd.—Mad doings have possessed me. I have not been able to write. Yesterday nothing but Highnesses. To-day I have a cough. Adieu.

Sunday, 8th October.—After a great pause I am in strange cold and heat. Soon a still greater pause. I am

waiting for the Duke of Weimar, who is coming from Karlsruhe with his handsome new wife Louise of Darmstadt. I am going with him to Weimar. Your brothers are also coming there, and from there I will certainly write, dearest sister. My heart is ill at ease about it. It is autumn weather within it, neither warm, nor cold. When are you coming to Hamburg? *

280.—To J. Fahlmer

[? 24 September, 1775.]

I am coming, dear dear aunt! This whole morning I have been wishing to write to you. I have endured on all sides terribly this week, but also resisted. God knows!—Now—oh, perhaps a word about it presently. I have looked for you continually at the play. Adieu.

G.

281.—To Lavater.

[Frankfort, end Sept. 1775.]

Zimmermann has gone and I have been lying in bed until ten o'clock in order to drive out a cold; more though to revive in myself the feeling of domestic affection which the ungodly bustle of the last few days had quite scattered. Father and mother came to the bedside, we talked confidentially, I drank my tea and thus I am better. I have a home-feeling again in my four walls, however long it lasts. Z. and I got on capitally together. You can imagine it yourself, and I should have a great deal to tell if you did not show my letters to every one. It may indeed be your way, and amusing to others, but I cannot bear my letters to reveal to a man what I would not say a tenth part of by word of mouth.

His conduct towards you is best left unexcused, it is better that such a thing should remain unexplained. I have distressed him very much about it, although he

* This letter was not sent till nearly seven weeks later. Its conclusion is given under Nov. 22.

immediately began the story with a very witty *captat. benev.*—His daughter is so reserved; not locked up, she is only retiring, and has left the door a little ajar. She would rather open to a softly lisping lover than to a knocking father.* It gave him great pain to have distressed you so, and you good man will not have experienced this for the last time.

> C'est le sort d'un amour extrême
> De faire toujours des ingrats.

The ways of the world and of the heart become more and more incomprehensible to me. Isolated trials resemble each other everywhere, and yet it is never to be thought from that that the greatest human head can take in the human economy as a whole.

Decide about the Phis. volume II., pray, pray! Otherwise nothing will come of it. New Year is almost here! Especially the first Socratic chapter [is wanted] soon.

Yesterday I jingled a little on the four madmen and Brutus. Brother, brother, how difficult it is to animate the dead copper, where the character only glimmers through wrong lines, and one continually hesitates as to why that betokens *something*, and yet betokens *nothing*. How different in the life!

Only decide and send soon, for there are a multitude of distractions. The Duke of Weimar is here, but will soon take Louise away. Could you not send me a crane-bill. Greet Bäbe,† she must write me something about herself and you. In the last fortnight, I have been quite in the show of the great world!

Is the table of Raphael heads numbered like the Hogarth?

282.—To Lavater.

[Frankfort, Autumn Fair, 1775.]

Here is my arm again on the stretch. But I

* Zimmerman and his sensitive daughter are described in the Autobiog., book xv.

† He refers to Frau Barbara Schulthess, an intimate friend of Lavater and Pfenninger. See Düntzer, *Leben*, p. 247.

expressly desire that you will not leave me in the lurch again. You must now tell me at once which plates you will leave out of those proposed by me, which (for this or that reason) you will leave in. Then I will go on working for you directly, think about the vignettes, &c. For the order must then remain fixed, even to trifles. Answer all, point by point, and say about what amount of general dissertations you wish to insert.

Tolerance towards the countenances of men! You may write that, I know nothing about it. Yesterday, deep in the buzz of the Fair-time ceremonials, Ariosto's expression about the mob occurred to me: *worthy of death before birth.* I await your Abraham kindly. I do not indeed know a word of how *I* could have dramatised him, but I am willing to further and serve your poetry. About the plates I have only dashed off something, so as to make a start from shore. If you would only supply me with wind! For I tell you whatever you desire of me, see to it quickly.

I want of you above all things—1, Rutgerodt; 2, Van Dyck. 3, No. 28–29.

In return I promise directly—1, Hedlinger, 2, Brutus, 3, No. 17.

Once more I ask you for Rutgerodt. Words! looks, it occupies me very much and you shall have all my attention. I swear to you, that with all your promises of remuneration—which please me too, for I am human, and I like the game—you do not drive me on so well as you do by sending back my balls quickly. If you had sent Newton that would have been sown and reaped. You must learn to know me if you wish to use me; otherwise you are a cunning rogue enough in that respect; but I will still teach you something more.

I have *already written* some more.

Pestaluz* has sent me word of his coming, so soon I shall see the son of your faith.

* Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the well-known teacher, born at Zurich 1746. He established in this year his first school for poor children in Canton Aargau.

immediately began the story with a very witty *captat. benev.*—His daughter is so reserved; not locked up, she is only retiring, and has left the door a little ajar. She would rather open to a softly lisping lover than to a knocking father.* It gave him great pain to have distressed you so, and you good man will not have experienced this for the last time.

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I want of you above all things—1, Rutgerodt; 2, Van Dyck. 3, No. 28–29.

In return I promise directly—1, Hedlinger, 2, Brutus, 3, No. 17.

Once more I ask you for Rutgerodt. Words! looks, it occupies me very much and you shall have all my attention. I swear to you, that with all your promises of remuneration—which please me too, for I am human, and I like the game—you do not drive me on so well as you do by sending back my balls quickly. If you had sent Newton that would have been sown and reaped. You must learn to know me if you wish to use me; otherwise you are a cunning rogue enough in that respect; but I will still teach you something more.

I have *already written* some more.

Pestaluz* has sent me word of his coming, so soon I shall see the son of your faith.

* Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the well-known teacher, born at Zurich 1746. He established in this year his first school for poor children in Canton Aargau.

I have got your 'Abraham.'* Deinet is coming to talk with me.

So Bäbe thinks I have forgotten her.

Deinet will print. Quarto! And I will do what I have set my heart on about it; but I am not exactly either in Abraham's position nor Isaac's. That piece will have a good wide effect: there will be a puff of scent here and there in it from my cask too, methinks. I cannot read the ciphers at the end of your letter. Send me the key quickly.

Pestaluz was very kind. I told him though, I wished you knew your countrymen better and they knew you better. He spoke entirely for you, without buts. Heaven grant [it was] with a pure heart.

283.—To ————†

I am as I can be. Thank you, monsters, for your letters, and as the sea woman does not write, lash her with nettles when she comes out of the bath. I have dramatised you three, *Count Christian Truchsess*, *Count Fr. Leopold*, and *Squire Curt*. Where you will be represented in the great coronation hall at Frankfort *in naturalibus*. If I can go to Weimar I shall probably do so, but certainly not for love of you! And for love of no man, for I have a pique against the whole world. I do not grudge you your journey, which is worthy of you! And may no dog make a boast of you, and be gaped at on that account as is fitting.

Zimmermann stoutly commended you. There are endless letters to the sea woman about it. So farewell, dear brothers. What I am doing is worth much less than a penstroke. Gustchen is an angel. The devil take it, that she is an imperial countess.—For the rest I am of the perfectest.

Write here when you
To Weimar come.

* A drama of Lavater's, "Abraham and Isaac." Düntzer thinks that one passage, "Abraham's prayer," was written by Goethe.

† Evidently to the Counts Christian and Fritz Leopold Stolberg and their companion Count Haugwitz.

284.—To J. H. Merck.

[Frankfort, October 1775.]

I am waiting for the Duke and Louise, and am going with them to Weimar. Then there will be again good things of all kinds, and wholes and halves, which may God bless to us. Farewell, meantime, old friend, and make the best of life. If you can send me ten carolins, do it by the next carrier. I am in want of them, and so on. I have translated the Song of Solomon, which is the grandest collection of love songs which God has made. Madame la Roche is in despair that you do not answer her. Ride over here once more before I go. I am pretty well. Have written a good deal at 'Faust' Zimmermann greets you; he went through Darmstadt at night. Greet wife and children.

285.—To Frau von Laroche.

11 Oct. 1775.

I am going to Weimar! Does that please you? I will see whether it is possible to agree with Wieland, so as to prepare something friendly for his old age on my part.

I am waiting for the young couple, and then go. Write to me there, you can enclose it to Wieland. Max is charming, and will become still more intimate with my mother in my absence, although Brentano hides all appearance of jealousy, or perhaps even considers me harmless now.

I have not been able to do anything for Buri,* I am entangled with my bookseller, and a new one would do it as a favour, and ask some sacrifice of me in return, but I will take his letter with me.

Wieland is still as of old, even in the Neuwied affair; this womanish vein will, I fear, keep me apart from him.

Here are Menalck and Mopsus. Zimmermann is very

* See note, p. 1, and Letter 240.

good! a character made! Swiss, free-born and modified in the German court, he charms all the world, especially the women.

Merke [*sic*] is still at home, and pretty well, otherwise I know little about him. You know the non-writer, non-answerer!

Your Fritz, dear mama!* That fate should pierce the heart of mothers with such swords at the moment when they ought to reap in full the reward of all their little cares—keep up! Who can do so else, and in weary hours lean on our love, which surely is perfect and eternal.

G.

286.—To C. L. von Knebel.

[Frankfort, October 1775.]

Your young ducal pair asked me to accompany them to Weimar; I made my arrangements, packed up, put on my travelling clothes, took leave and remained sitting here. By what fate I know not, Kalb,† to whom they referred me, did not come, but I should certainly have followed if it were not too dangerous in the present state of the weather and roads, to make the journey alone. In the meantime there are surely letters for me with Kalb and Wieland, and among them some which still touch my heart; therefore put them up together please, and send them by horse-post to my usual address at Frankfort; if there are any parcels, send them by post-cart, but quickly. Love me, and greet all who remember me according to what is due to their rank, and heart, and dignities.

G.

287.—To G. A. Bürger.‡

[Frankfort.]

Where in the world I am sitting must be all the same to you! You feel that it is a moment of boundless

* Fritz von Laroche, her son, was leading a dissolute life.

† J. A. A. von Kalb was *Kammerath* (Councillor of the Chamber) at the Weimar Court.

‡ Here addressed as Bailiff at Altengleichen, near Göttingen. See Letter 163.

necessity which places the pen in my hand to you, dear Bürger. Here on the right hand I am warmed by a pleasant fireside, and I am writing to you on a low seat, at a child's little table. I have so much to tell you, but will tell you nothing, and you will understand me!—The first moments of composure which by a mad chance, by a *lettre de cachet* of fate, are thrown over my heart, the first after the most desultory, the most perplexed, the most complete, the fullest, the emptiest, the strongest, the silliest three-quarters of a year which I have ever had in my life. Whatever human nature can collect of contradictions the Fairy Kind or Unkind—what should I call her?—bestowed on me as the New Year's present of '75; in fact the excellent arrangement was already made with the christening gift; and so let everything take its course. How it will be with me henceforth, God knows! It will be still more restless, still more entangled; and then I shall recall with pleasure the present moment in which I write. The clock strikes six. Wednesday, 18th of October, 1775.

What is your domestic situation with your wife? Have you any children, I hear absolutely nothing from you. Write to me only when you wish at Frankfort, I receive the letters duly. I have written all sorts of things that ought to afford you a pleasant hour. But they are one and all delinquents and lack the good report which we should have before our Mother Nature.

288.—To J. Fahlmer.

[Weimar, 22 Nov. 1775.*]

Dear little Aunt! How like a sleigh-ride goes my life; swiftly away, and tinkling and careering up and down. God knows for what I am still destined, that I am passed through such a school. This gives my life new impetus, and everything will be well. I can say nothing

* Goethe was now paying a visit to the Duke of Weimar—a visit which practically never ended. He arrived at Weimar on the 7th of November, and after a short absence in the neighbourhood in the following month he returned, and soon received a permanent appointment at the Court.

of my domestic economy, it is too confused, but everything goes on desirably; it is a wonderful show here, naturally. Write me a word. Wieland is very amiable, we always keep together, and I am only too fond of being amongst his children. His wife is thoroughly good, and like Madame la Roche. Adieu; ask mama to open all letters in French envelopes. Here is one back. Give it to the papa, with the request to attend in my name to what is needful, to treat with the Herren Diacres about the suit and to keep the Trümbachs' money himself. Here is a letter to them which he can send them.* Adieu. Greet the dear Gerocks and Max. Write me something of the fate of this unhappy one. Adieu. But we shall certainly meet again in this world.

Never mind the above commissions to papa, I will write to him myself. Fritz has been ill, I hear—the kind soul.

Wieland has written a long letter to him. I, too, shall probably write to him again to-day.

Give this letter to mama to read.

G.

288A.—[To Auguste zu Stolberg.†]

[Weimar, 22 Nov.]

I am expecting your brothers oh Gustchen. How all this time has passed with me! Here I have been for nearly a fortnight already, in the bustle and movement of the court. Adieu; more soon; together with our brothers. You shall have this sheet in the meantime.

G.

289.—To Herder.

[Weimar, about 10th Dec. 1775.]

Dear Brother, the Duke wants a Superintendent-General.‡ If you have by this time altered your plans as to Göttingen, something might be done here. Write me a

* These instructions refer to Goethe's business as an advocate. The children of the Freiherr von Trümbach were Fräul. von Klettenberg's heirs. U. p. 100.

† This is the conclusion of Letter 279, which was not sent until now.

‡ A clerical post united with that of court chaplain.

word. Anyhow in the mutability of the future there is a prospect here. Farewell. Greet the wifie. I am well off here in every respect. Wieland is a good soul, and the princes noble, amiable and kind.

GOETHE.

290.—To LAVATER.

Friday, 21st Dec.

AFTER a splendid winter's day, which I have mostly spent in the open air; in the morning with the duke, in the afternoon with Wieland, tolerably tired, and out of breath with skating, I am sitting near W. and will see what I can glean together for you. Your Physiognomy lies on my mind. I will do the chapter allotted to me. Short enough and, God willing, concise, and to the point; that is everything. For it is not now the time for spinning out, whilst I am hurried about in more extensive style of living and diversion from morning till night. I am also diligently looking after the remaining copper-plates; I talk to all kinds of people about them. Wieland has given me his sentiments, and so all will be well. I am going soon to Leipsic, so if you want anything there write in time and let me execute it.

Moreover, the Duke wants a Superintendent-General; he asked me about it, and I named Herder to him. Who, as perhaps you know, is not yet quite certain to go to Göttingen. The Duke commissioned me to ask whom you would suggest. Let me have a word then quickly about this, and whom else you could suggest in default of Herder.

I am quite as if amongst my own people here, and the Duke becomes daily dearer to me, and we daily become more united.

Greet all for me. I have kind letters from Passavant; from Zimmermann, too, who tells me of your good courage and brisk way with the rascals of country folk.

To-morrow I am going through Jena to Waldeck, to seek out wild regions and simple men. Addio. Everything goes according to my heart's wish, the same to you.

G.

Bäbe,* too, may exert herself to write to me once more. Greet your wife. Do not be too laconic with me.

In the list of contents of the Phis. sent to me, the last numbers are wrong; in order that there may be no disorder in the plates, you will find a double set of numbers.

291.—To the Duke of Weimar.†

Waldeck, 23 Dec. 1775.

In falling mist, in deep laid snow,
In forest wild, in the winter's night,
I hear the hungry howl of wolves,
I hear the cry of owls.
Wow, wow, wo, wo,
Towhit, towhoo.

My man he shot a cat in the hedge,
'Twas Ann the neighbour's dear black cat.
Seven werewolves came in the night to me;
Seven they were, seven village crones.
Wow, wow, &c.

I knew them all, I knew them well,
They were Anna and Ursel and Kate
And Reupel and Bab and Lizz and Meg;
They yelled at me in a ring.
Wow, wow, &c.

I named them all by their names aloud.
What would you, Anna? What would you, Kate?
They shivered and quivered and shook themselves,
And howled and ran away.‡
Wow, wow, &c.

That my old gipsy song again occurs to me in this corner of the world, at night in this season, is quite as natural, my dear gracious sire, as that I should forthwith

* See note, Letter 281.

† This was written on an expedition made with Kalb, Einsiedel and Bertuch to the village of Waldeck, beyond Jena, where they lodged with the Duke's forester, Slevoigt. The Duke had gone on a visit to Gotha. Hildebrand von Einsiedel held the office of *Hof- u. Regierungsrath*, and Bertuch was the Duke's private secretary.

‡ This song occurs in the first version of 'Götz von Berlichingen at the opening of Act v.

sit down to write it out to you, and scrawl a letter on the back of it; for in truth, I miss you already, although we have scarcely been separated twelve hours. Down below they are still sitting at the cleared table smoking and chattering, so that I hear them through the floor. I have come up here, it is half-past eight. Wind and weather have driven us here, and rain and its accompaniments. The valley as far as Jena smiled on me in the happy evening sunlight with all its barren splendour; the situation of Jena itself pleased me, the place oppressed me, and between there and here there was not much to gape at; a storm of rain came from Italy, as an old man assured us, who accompanied us with a wheelbarrow. If it is warm in Italy, the warm wind comes hither; he was there in the thirties; in this style he talked away quite volubly.—Here we are situated right amongst the pines, amongst people good by nature. On the way we have been greeting the printed Karl August in the inns, and have felt how dear you are to us, that your name gave us joy even beside the [L.S.] Einsiedel is in bed. His stomach is out of order; coffee and brandy will not do it any good. I will go too. A hearty good-night!

One more word before I go to sleep. As I rode in the night towards the pine-hills, the feeling of the past, of my fate, and of my love, came over me, and I sang thus to myself:

Lili sweet, thou wert so long
All my joy and all my song,
Now, alas, thou'rt all my pain
Yet my song thou dost remain.

Now again and again good-night:

Be happy midst the hundred lights aglow
That brightness round thee spend,
And faces all arow
That round about thee bend,
And at the board attend.
Yet wilt thou find true joy and peace alone
Midst souls as true and simple as thine own.

Sunday morning [24th] at daybreak.—Odious thaw, and so the whole tone of the day is put out of tune. We shall see how we are to bring it in again. The splendid morning star, which henceforth I take for my coat of arms,* stands high in the heavens. I have dreamt the whole night of the march of armies, which have indeed all run away, particularly of a journey from Switzerland to Poland, which I took to see Marshal de Saxe and to serve under him, he being still alive in my dream-world. Church is going on, to which we will not go, but I am sending to ask the parson whether he has the Odyssey, and if he has not, I shall send to Jena, for it is impossible to do without it in this Homeric simple world. A few verses especially occurred to me happily, when I had been awake a long time early this morning, and day would not come. They are something of this sort: "And wrapped in their skins they lay by the glowing hearth; over them hovered the wet stormy air through the unending night, and they lay and slept the refreshing sleep until the late dawning morn."†

I must send to Bürgel to the rector for the Homer; in the meantime I have been reading the Bible. Here is a passage from Isaiah: "Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty . . . and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . The new wine vanisheth, the vine languisheth, and all the merry hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, and the song of the harp ceaseth. No one singeth at the drinking of wine, the best wine is bitter in the mouth. The city of confusion is broken down, the houses are shut up. No man goeth in or out. . . . In the city is empty desolation and the gates are deserted; for in the midst of the land, and among the people, it is as when an olive tree hath been plucked, and like as grapes are after-gleaned so is the vintage gathered."‡

Now I must send off my messenger, who carries this to Weimar. Dear gracious Sire, do not let any one see this

* When Goethe was ennobled, he actually carried out this intention.

† This seems to be an imperfect reminiscence of the scene between Ulysses and Eumæus. Od. xiv.

‡ The passage will be found in Isaiah, ch. xxiv. There are some variations from the English version.

but Wedel. All around me, Einsiedel, Kalb, Bertuch, the whole household lays itself at your feet.

We fishes never
Our duty forget.

Sunday morning, 11.—Our messenger who is bringing skates is not yet here, a thousand curses have been sent to meet him; we have been creeping and crawling about the neighbourhood. Immediately behind the house-garden a wild pathway leads to a cliff on which stands an ancient castle of the Counts of Gleichen, in the midst of the pine-valley; Bertuch and his maiden have arranged seats of grass and moss, little harbours and nooks which are very romantic; there are some wild views from the cliffs, and a more open and inviting one across the pine-valleys towards Bürgel. The morning sun was lovely. I ascended with Bertuch sideways up a rocky footpath, to a spring and fish-reservoir; icicles were hanging down the rocks.

The messenger is here, and now to the ice. Blessing on the morning and mealtime, dear gracious Sire.——The skates were forgotten, I have been stamping and cursing and have stood and sulked at the window for a quarter of an hour. Now they are soothing me with the hope that another messenger may follow. I must even go to dinner without skating.

Evening, 4 o'clock.—They have come, I have been skating and I am better.

The first Festival [25 Dec.], eight in the morning. I have slept rather long, the sun is already in the sky. Yesterday evening was frittered away over dice and cards.

Six in the evening.—So too the whole of to-day. Have ridden to Bürgel. The Town house is fine. It would make a summer-day's ride for your Highness. And the Revier Waldend is very beautiful. Woods are in such good condition that it is really delightful. Hofrath Hochhausen has a portrait of Duke Ernst Augustus. It has something stiff and shy, betokens a man who in reality does not reflect, but rather lets himself be decided by the first impulse of the moment, dry, abrupt, but kind, and, apart

from the compensating trait of good nature, with other excellent capacities for a tyrant. The last Duke of Weissenfels was also hanging there. Einsiedel had to draw his character for me. He hit it; straightforwardness goodnature, wavering weakness, inactivity and all that goes therewith. Afterwards home. The Odyssey was at last hunted up. After dinner Rugantino and Basko tumbled about, after we had let our imagination run wild, as it might have done had we been rogues and vagabonds; and in order to do it naturally we had changed clothes. Krause also had come, and in Bertuch's white laced coat, and an old wig of the keeper's, looked like a broken down country scrivener; Einsiedel, in my dress-coat with a blue cravat. like a played-out gambling student, and I in Kalb's blue coat with yellow buttons, red collar, and frayed cross,* and moustachios, like a rascal-in-chief.

292.—To Lavater.

Erfurt, last day of the year, '75.

As you measure so shall it be meted to you again; be free of all anxiety about the Phs. I am still in Thuringia, always at most a day and a half's journey from Leipsic. I am already wishing to act and direct. Wieland thanks you. I am yours. Don't Thomas me. I am learning bettere very day to steer on the wave of humanity. I am in the deep sea.

G.

293.—To Herder.

Erfurt, last day of the year, '75.

Trust and wait a few days longer for the approval.

G.

294.—To Herder.

Stetten, near Erfurt, 2 [Jan.] 1776.

To-day I can really give you hope, which I could not do the day before yesterday. And that I do at once, not for your sake, but for your wife's. I am here with Wieland,

* Probably the official badge in the Chamberlain's coat collar.

amongst friendly people. You must also help him to strengthen his *Mercury*, on which his livelihood and his children's prosperity depend. He wishes to have you here, and had the idea before I did. But I do not know what is now going on. I hope you will have it through me alone and by the free choice of the Duke. The governor of Erfurt has given you the best recommendations, and assured the young prince of your genius and power. I have spoken well of your politic prudence in spiritual matters: for the Duke will absolutely have no priestly squabbling about orthodoxy and the devil, and that is what the —— have been doing.* I want you for my Duke, and him for you. It will be an advantage to both of you; yes, dear brother, I must settle it before I go. Farewell! you shall be told how the matter progresses. Tear up my notes, as I conscientiously do yours.

295.—To Herder.

Answer me quickly, how do you stand with Jerusalem?† A good letter from him would do much. Dear brother, we have always fallen out with the rogues, and rogues sit upon the tub everywhere.

The Duke desires it and wants you, but everything here is against you. However it is a question now of being appointed to a good living and an income of 2000 *Reichsthalers*. I shall not let it go, if it does not fall through. Farewell, and write, and seal the letters well, and pay attention to the seals on mine.

296.—To Herder.

Dear Brother, name to me one single theologian who has an *orthodox* reputation and is in your favour. . . . Who, if he were asked, would say *Good* of you. For in my political divination *sum a testimonio* ‡ is what counts here.

* This probably refers to the opposition which the proposed appointment of Herder met with from the clerical party and the Duchess Louise's friends. See Dünzter, p. 268. † See note ‖ page 68.

‡ So printed by Hirzel, probably for *summa testimonia*.

Obey what I write to you punctually as a word of command, and trust that all is well thought over.

G.

297.—To Herder.

Brother, be at ease, I do not need the testimonials; I have driven the rascals in with fine hunting whips, and there cannot be much more delay before you will have the summons. I will look out for a little place for you, so that you may take the reins in hand here at once. Perhaps I shall remain here too some time longer. When I have this settled I shall be comfortable for a while; for this project has been present with me waking and sleeping and by the *best* means.* Before you come, brother, a *bellus modus* for many matters must first be concerted. Our Duke is a golden youth. The Duchesses† also want you. *Write me once more in detail.*

Nothing in the world comes off by *coups de bayonnette*—and yet—perhaps by this post you will have already got the summons.

G.

298.—To J. Fahlmer.

[5 Jan. 1776.]

I ought to write to my mother, therefore I write to you, that you may together enjoy and digest my letter. I am still in the most desirable position in the world. I am hovering over all the most secret and important matters, have a happy influence, enjoy myself, learn and so on. But now I am in want of money—for nobody lives on air—so I just want to say, dear aunt, consider it over with mother, whether the father has a [sufficient] sense of and sympathy for all the dazzling splendour of his son, to give me 200fl. or a part of it. If

* He probably means that the Duke was constantly pressing him to stay.

† I.e. both the Dowager Amalia and Louise. According to Düntzer, however, the latter was not pleased with the project, though she did not openly oppose it (*Leben*, p. 268). In fact Goethe himself was not in favour with her party at first, appearing as he did to encourage the Duke in extravagant conduct. However, Karl August knew well enough what he was about in retaining Goethe's services in opposition to most of his officials.

that does not answer, mother must write to Merck, and tell him to send it me. The most convenient way would be to send it in gold by the mail coach, amongst other things. Take this, dear aunt, on your shoulders. And do it for me in the correct way; for I must be correct in what is my father's. I can write nothing in detail. Time will show. Write me something sometimes please, for however well off I am, I often need it. Addio. Greet Fritz.

I have just received the box with the provisions. Tell Mama, when there is an opportunity, to send me Haman's writings which have come from Reich.

299.—To J. H. Merck.

[Postscript to a letter from Wieland of 5 Jan. 1776.]

It is disgusting to me to see you in this roving humour. You will, I suppose, travel together and sing somewhat too that the King and the Queen, &c.

I am certainly going on madly enough here, and often think of you. I will send you your books too, and I beg you to refresh father and mother a little. I love you heartily too.

You will probably soon learn that I know how to tragedize a little on the *theatrum mundi*; and conduct myself tolerably in all tragico-comic farces. Addio. I have given my mother a commission for you. I hear you are in tolerably good condition. Rely upon it that I shall not fail you. G.

300.—To Lavater.

Weimar, Wieland's room, 22 Jan. 1776.

The Duke has had six skulls sent to me. I have made fine observations, which are at the service of your reverence if you have not found them out without me. Greet Bäbe and all.

When I ask you again about anything answer *me!* Why [write] about Herder to Louise?!!!* *Transeat cum ceteris propheticis erroribus.*

* Goethe was evidently aware of the Duchess's feeling about Herder's appointment, though he concealed it from the latter.

Keep on sending what you have, I cannot work at a moment's notice.

So many soldiers in copper-plates have the sword in the left hand,—our angel may well have the star on the right breast.

Always send the letters to me here.

301.—To J. H. Merck.

Weimar, 22 Jan. 1776.

I only received the money, dear brother, on 19th January! What you can spare longer than March, let me keep; but what you want back again you shall have. Here is a receipt.

I am now quite involved in all court and political business, and shall scarcely be able to get away again. My position is advantageous enough, and the Duchies of Weimar and Eisenach are at all events a stage on which to try how one's rôle in life suits one. I therefore do not over-hurry myself, and freedom and satisfaction will be the chief conditions of the new arrangement, although I am more than formerly in a position to see the pervading vileness of this temporal splendour. For that very reason adieu! I have played a trick, which will I hope be carried through and give you great amusement.

Dear brother, enjoy the enclosed, but send it on at once, with the letter, by horse-post to my sister.

302.—To J. Fahlmer.

14 Feb. '76.

I hear nothing from you, as you hear nothing from us, yet you must learn a good deal from Frau Aya,* and I have thought that you sometimes write to me in your heart, that I may not become quite a stranger to you. I accommodate myself here to the life and the life to me. I wish I could write to you in complete

* I.e., Frau *Aja*, a name given to Goethe's mother by the Stolbergs, and constantly used by her correspondents, the Duchess Amalia, the Duke, Wieland, etc. See Keil, *Frau Rath; passim.*

detail, but it cannot be, so many threads run through each other, so many twigs from the stem cross each other, that without a diary, which I have not yet written, there is nothing intelligible to be said. Herder has accepted the appointment of Superintendent General.

I shall also stay here and play my rôle as well as I can, as long as it pleases me and fate. If it were only for two years, still it is in any case better than the inactive life at home, where with the utmost desire I can do nothing. Here at least I have two duchies before me. At present I have only arrived at learning to know the country, which already gives me much amusement, and the Duke acquires thereby a love for work, and as I know him thoroughly I am, with regard to many things, thoroughly and completely at my ease. I lead a sweet domestic life with Wieland, dine and sup with him when I am not at court. The girls here are very pretty and good, I am on good terms with all. A noble soul is Frau von Stein, to whom, as might be said, I am attached and firmly annexed. Louise and I live together only in glances and syllables; she is and ever will be an angel. I have very good times with the Duke's mother, and carry on all sorts of jokes and pranks. You cannot imagine how many good young fellows and good heads are together here; we hold together, get on splendidly with one another, dramatize one another, and keep the court at a distance. Send me as soon as possible some long ladies' feathers, you know about such cocks-combs, two rose coloured, three white, as fine as you can get them, and the price: you shall have the money immediately. Fritz and all my friends complain of me!

G.

303.—To Lavater.

[Weimar, middle Feb. 1776.]

I have been a little vexed over your plan of working. I have seen for a long time that you would not follow mine; but all right, if you have your own, and can carry it out without me. Now exactly all that I have done will not come into the volume. I am not doing Haman. But this

I promise you, that I will look after and keep everything in order to the end. Only send everything and forward it, as you do, to Wieland. We shall perhaps make a journey, the Duke and I, but it shall not delay anything. Have you read Aristotle on Physiognomy, a passage out of it will look well in reference to the skulls of beasts, perhaps an extract at the end of the second volume. Farewell and love [me].

Herder is to be Superintendent General, &c.

When I ask you a question in future answer *me*—what you *think* and *imagine* may be all very well, but when I ask you must never answer *women*. As indeed you ought never to write but to one with whom you have lived, and only in accordance with how you have lived with him. I hope and feel that the tone of your third volume will be less tremulous and faltering. I should like to do away with that. But if you could write it, it may as well be published too.

N.B. Your love* for me decreases—you only write to me when you want me! Mark that and do not grudge me an hour's enjoyment.

* I.e. Expression of love—necessary word and speech, co-existence; that is to say, I am a used-up thing to you.—Amen.

304.—To J. Fahlmer.

19 Feb. '76.

Dear Aunt, a political song! If you were here you could have the honour every day. Probably I shall do nothing else than remain here, and now I must prepare you for a visit. Ponder over this letter with Mama. Master-of-the-Horse Von Stein is going shortly through Frankfort and will visit father and mother. He is a good fellow whom they might well entertain, but they must not seem too delighted with my position here. Besides he is not quite satisfied with the Duke, like almost all the court, because he does not dance to their piping, and secretly and openly the blame is given to me! If he lets fall something of this, let it be passed over. Above all, ask more than you tell, let him talk more than

you talk, the rest I leave to your prudence. I wish the history of my four last months could be written, it would be a meal for a good crowd. Farewell and write to me that your remembrance may be kept for ever and ever.

G.

305.—To Lavater.

[6th March, '76. Weimar.]

Dear Brother; only be at ease about me; and do not weary yourself, fidget, without occasion; I have all your Physiognomy, but the second volume is getting much stronger as I now consider, and I will speak with Reich about it that it may be good too. Depend upon it—I am now well embarked on the waves of the world—fully determined to discover, to win, to strive, to be wrecked, or to blow myself up with all my cargo. But let me hear from you! It is not enough that you love me. Though it is all done, and is already fairly written by *amanuenses*.

G.

306.—To J. Fahlmer.

6 March.

Write to me and love me. Do not be anxious about me. I devour my way through everywhere, as the enthusiast says. Now I beg you to be at ease once for all, the father may cook as he likes, I cannot always answer for that, cannot always put these whims right. Thus much there is: I remain here; have hired a beautiful lodging, but father owes me an outfit and dowry,* which mother may manage after her way, but she must not be a child, for I am *brother* and *everything* to a prince. The Duke has again presented me with 100 ducats—given, if you like. I am to him what I can be to him, he to me what he can be—that may now go on how and as long as it can. I am in debt still to all sorts of people, which does not matter.—But the mother must only do her part, and see what is

* Urlichs explains that Goethe considered himself entitled to the same amount as his sister had received on her marriage.

possible from the father, without tormenting herself!—If at any time she wants money and cannot have it from father, I will send it her.

G.

I will send the money for the feathers shortly.

307.—To J. H. Merck.

8th March.

Dear Brother, if you have the money, give the mother a receipt. Send me the Matinées back, and you will get more. We are playing the very deuce, but I less than the fellow who is now writing a splendid drama on our life.* Everything goes well with us all, for what goes ill I do not fight against. I have tried the court, I will now try the government, and so ever onward. I am in health even under the influence of this odious weather. I am wandering somewhat pleasantly in Thuringia and already know a good bit of it. It is an amusement to me to learn a country so by heart. Adieu, greet all. Wieland is extremely happy in your company.

G.

308.—To J. Fahlmer.

18 March, '76. Weimar.

The day after to-morrow we travel to Dessau. I shall also see Leipsic again, it will be a wonderful sensation. Do not say anything to anybody. When father has declared what he will give me towards outfit Mama may provide me, by preference with the larger articles, and also a few good cuffs (the very best of course). The Duke has privately ordered me to have all my furniture made, in order to make me a present of it on our meeting again. But father need not know this. Farewell! Perhaps I shall write again from Dessau.

G.

Mama must think of her cash-box too, I have made her pay out madly. There is still a bill to pay to tailor Eberhard. Further, she is to sell all the clothes left behind by me.

* What this means it is hard to say; it seems to be referred to also near the end of No. 302, and perhaps also in No. 301.

309.—To His Serene Highness the Duke of Saxe-Weimar.

Leipsic, 26 March, '76.

Dear Sire, I need not write much to be able to tell you all; yet I have suffered much to-day from recollections. But I have had happy moments too. Schröder* is thoroughly amiable and good.

Your pique against Oeser pains me doubly now since I have found in him again just the same loving good man and true artist as of old. Good night, dearest sire.

G.

310.—To J. Fahlmer.

April, 1776.

Dear Aunt, God reward you for all. I am quite well again here. N.B. Wanted a dozen fine Dutch-linen pocket-handkerchiefs, very large, and a pair of very good cuffs—I have enough of the medium kind. Farewell and merrily.

Nothing more of Lili, she is a thing of the past. I have long hated the people in my deepest heart. Attraction was still the key-stone. The devil take them. I pity the poor creature, that she was born amongst such a race. Adieu Aunt, you are ever the dear same!—Greet Fritz. Very soon a letter of elevated composition from me to the father.

311.—To J. H. Merck.†

Ilmenau, 24 July, 1776.

We are here to see whether we can set the old mining works going again. You can imagine how I am sketching about the Thuringian forest. The Duke goes

* Corona Schröter, whom he had known as a young actress in former days at Leipsic, and who was soon appointed *Hofsängerin* at Weimar. See Biography, p. l. *above*.

† This letter is given in Karl Wagner's *Briefe an Merck*, but is omitted by Hirzel. Goethe had accepted from the Duke in April a permanent post as Geheime Legations Rath at the Weimar Court, and his continued residence there was practically decided.

out after deer and I after landscapes, and even when I am hunting I take my sketch-book with me. But things will soon go on as they ought. Let the wine remain till the proper time, and send the other with it also. Do not forget a little good table wine, of sixty or thereabout, of medium strength. When we are in the country we manage our own housekeeping, and find ourselves better off so.——Hold me ever dear; believe that I am always the same; it is true I have had something to endure, and thus have become quite thrown back into myself. The Duke is just the same, whereby the world certainly gets little pleasure. We keep together, and go our own way, and certainly run a-muck of all, bad, middling, and good; but still we shall make our way through, for the gods are visibly with us. Addio! Greet the mother!

Lenz has become at last quite amiable and good in our society, he is now sitting alone amongst woods and mountains, as happy as he is capable of being. Kaiser cannot walk along with me. he oppresses me. I told him so, he was beside himself about it, and could not understand, and I could not, and did not care to explain.*

312.—To Lavater.

[Weimar, 25, 26, 30 Aug. 1776.]

Sunday night. I will at least once more begin a letter to you, that we may once more touch each other. A splendid moonlight night! I have just been across the meadow, as far as my garden. I have refreshed myself in the dim night, and thought of you——Dear Brother, that you should just be so worried at the time when I am so happy! When fate has prepared for me a quite perfect moment, and an active evolution in the future, so that I be not idle! Good-night.

* Wagner gives twenty more letters from Goethe to Merck, the last being dated 8 April 1785. Merck's domestic circumstances were such as to cause him great sadness, and at last, rendered desperate by private and official troubles, he died by his own hand, in 1791.

Monday 26. To-day your bust has happily arrived from Frankfort, and given me much pleasure. Herewith you have a shadow-portrait of the Duke. I now feel how far apart we are from each other. I can write you nothing. Results and abstractions I like not, stories and details I can not.

Friday 30. I will only just send you this, for I cannot say more now. Greet Bäbe, thank the dear creature for her letter. Here are a few lines of pure feeling written in the Thuringian Forest, the 3rd August, morning, in the midst of drawing.

TO DESTINY.

My pleasure here I cannot tell
Within this narrow world to dwell,
Held by a gentle magic spell!
My Carl and I forget herein
How strangely us a fate profound doth lead;
And ah! I feel in this repose we win
The training that for scenes untried we need.
Thou lovest us, and this belief dost give—
That without thee we only plan in vain,
When faithlessly and rashly we would strive
Before the time aught from thee to obtain.
Thou hast for us devised the means correct,
In pure and cloudlike veil conceal'd,
That thus with vital force fulfill'd,
We may in present sweet the future good expect.

Adieu. Greet Kaiser, thank him for the music. Does your little wife still think of me, and does she still love me? I have advised the Countess Wartensleben to send her son to Dessau. Here is her silhouette.

Write to me! G.

What do you say to this, everlastingly distorted with reducing and cutting out, piece of femininity?

313.—To Lavater.

16 Sept., '76.

As you have been good and written to me at once, here is an ejaculation from me which you may take in a friendly way. Dear brother, that you will not acquire firmness, cannot acquire it, troubles me sometimes when I bear in stillness *peccata mundi*. I have been for the last year in quite definite, moral, political, instantaneous relations, and my heart is true to me so; and you——now it must be so—may be at rest about Karl and Louise. If the gods did not play their pranks with mankind they would be one of the happiest, as they are one of the best of couples. Nothing human stands between, only the worshipful decrees of incomprehensible fate. If I could appear to you and tell you what cannot be written you would fall on your face and worship him who is there, and was and will be. But believe in me as I believe in the Eternal. Greet Bäbe and all, and Kayser. Lenz is like a sick child amongst us, and Klinger like a bone in the flesh, he swears, and, alas! will swear himself out. G.

Send me betimes something for the third volume. Willingly shall you have what I can give; in the perpetually moving world in which I live a thousand observations! and in one happy moment I skim off the cream for you!——Though perhaps not!——Enough, what I can!

Allwill's Letters are by Fritz Jacobi *—not by me.

All day and night long stood my vessel freighted,
Waiting a fair wind, I, with true friends round me,
Patience and good courage drinking to me,
Sat in the haven.

And like me they also were impatient:
Gladly wish we to thee swiftest voyage,
Gladly trip most prosperous. Goods in plenty
Yonder in those worlds of thine lie waiting:
And for thee, unto our arms returning,
Love and guerdon.

* See note, p. 253.

And on early morrow there was turmoil,
And the sailor's shout drives slumber from us;
All is thronging, all is life and motion,
With the first fair breath to weigh our anchor.
And the gentle breeze the sails are filling,
And the sun with fiery love entices.
Sails are flying, clouds high up are fleeting,
All our friends upon the strand towards us
Songs of hope in tumult glad are shouting,
Thinking travel-joys are like the morn of starting,
Or as on the first bright starry evening.

But the changeful winds by gods appointed
Drive him sideways from the course determined,
And he seems to yield himself unto them,
Striving quietly to overreach them
True to aim e'en though he sail obliquely.

But from out the gray and gloomy distance
Slowly doth the storm announce its coming,
Pressing down the sea-birds on the waters,
Pressing down the full hearts of the people.
Then it comes. Before its stubborn raging
All his sails the prudent skipper lowers,
Whilst the fear-struck ship becomes a ball for
Wind and water.

And upon the shore far off are standing
Friends and dear ones, trembling on the mainland.
Ah! they say, why did he not remain here!
Woful storm! Cut all adrift from fortune
Is the good man thus consigned to ruin.
Well-a-day, he can, ye gods! he must be!

Manfully, yet, stands he at the rudder,
Wind and waters playing with the vessel,
With his heart nor wind nor waters playing.
Kinglike at the dreadful deep he gazes,
On his gods relying, though the end be
Land or shipwreck.

G

11 Sept. '76.

The following are all the letters from Goethe to his mother that I have met with. With one exception, they are all to be found in the interesting collection of Robert Keil, which under the title *Frau Rath*, gives her correspondence with various notable persons, including Wieland, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, the Dowager Duchess Amalia, the Fräulein von Göchhausen, and other friends of her son.

Goethe's mother furnished him with traits of character for Elizabeth in *Goetz von Berlichingen*, the amiable house-wife in *Hermann and Dorothea*, and other attractive characters; and her letters well justify the respect and affection with which Goethe always regarded her, and account for many of the best qualities in her son's intellectual endowment.

The additional letter—No. VIII.—is to be found in Frese's *Goethe-Briefe aus Fritz Schlosser's Nachlass*, published in 1877.—ED.

GOETHE'S LETTERS TO HIS MOTHER.

I.

W[eimar] 28th June, '77

I CAN say nothing to you, but that fortune always behaves alike to me, and that the death of my sister * is all the more painful to me because it has overtaken me in such happy times. I can only feel humanly, and leave myself to Nature, who allows us to feel sharp pain for only a short time, though sorrow for long.

May you be happy. Take care of father's health, we are only once together thus. Kraus's † drawing is ready, and will come soon. Good-bye, dear mother. Greet poor Schlosser also for me.

G.

II.

Nov. '77.

ABOUT the strange news in your last letter I can say nothing. My heart and mind have always been so used to Fate's playing-ball with them, that they have almost no feeling left for anything new, be it happiness or misery. To me it is as though a tree were planted in the autumn; may God bless it, that we may some day sit under its shade and enjoy its fruit. In my sister so strong a root that bound me to earth has been torn up, that the branches, from the top downwards, which derived their nourishment from it, must also die off. If in dear Fahlmer ‡ a new root, sympathy and attachment, will

* Cornelie, who had married J. G. Schlosser in 1773.

† Georg Melchior Kraus, the Frankfort artist.

‡ J. G. Schlosser was now engaged to Johanna Fahlmer. They were married 24 Sept. 1778.

again grow into life, I also for my part will thank the gods with you. I am too accustomed to say of those around me: "These are my mother, my sisters and brothers," &c., &c.* As far as you are concerned, God be blessed; for you will be newly built up round about and the rent mended.

Schlosser must send me Lenz's book 'Stuart's Finance System,' also his treatise on Legislature. Father can send him *Poetæ Græci Minores*, they are still at home in folio I think. He must make me a present of the Sophocles, I have lost it; or if I must account for it in money I will pay him with that for which I am owed for Peter.†

How my tooth and cheek are is of no consequence, a little gathering had set itself up in the lower jaw, but it did not pain me, and is now going away. My household is beginning to get into order. In my little summer-house it is almost as if one were in a ship out at sea. Adieu. G.

III.

9 Aug., 1779.

My longing to see you once again has hitherto been moderated by the circumstances in which with more or less necessity I found myself here. But now I can find an opportunity, about which, however, I must above all demand the strictest secrecy. The duke wishes to enjoy the beautiful autumn season on the Rhine; I should go with him, and the Chamberlain Wedel. We would stay at your house for a few days, remain there in order to avoid friends at the fair, and then go further up the river; then return, and make our head-quarters with you in order to visit the neighbourhood from there. Whether you take this prosaically or poetically, it is in point of fact the dot on the *i* of your past life, and I should

* Matt. xii. 9.

† Peter Imbaumgarten, a foundling who had been bequeathed to his care by Baron Lindau, a young Hanoverian friend of Lavater's residing in Switzerland. The name is said to have been given to him in consequence of his having been found in an orchard (*Baumgarten*). It is also said that the boy once saved Lindau's life. (See Goethes Werke. ed Hempel, xxiii. p. 201.) Baron Lindau was in Weimar in 1776 and died in the following year. See also later letters below.

come back for the first time to my fatherland quite well and contented, and as full of honour as possible. But I should wish that, when there has been so fair a vintage on the hills of Samaria, there should also be piping thereto.* I desire nothing but that you and the father should receive us with open and kindly hearts, and thank God who allows you again to see your son in his thirtieth year in such a manner. As I have withstood all temptation to slip away from here and surprise you I wish to enjoy this journey quite after my heart's desire. I do not expect the impossible. God has not willed that father should enjoy the ardently desired fruits which are now ripe. He has spoilt his appetite, and so let it be. I, on my side, will ask nothing further of him than such behaviour as the humour of the moment prompts. But you I should like to see right happy, and bid you a good day, like no other. I have everything which man can ask, a life in which I daily exercise myself and daily grow, and come this time in health, without passion, without perplexity, without gloomy impulse, but like one beloved of God, who has completed the half of his life, and out of past suffering hopes much good for the future, and also has armed his breast for future suffering. If I find you contented, I shall return with joy to the work and daily toil which awaits me. Answer me on the whole question immediately. We are coming at all events by the middle of September; you shall know the details to the minutest point when I have an answer to this. But an inviolable secrecy for the present even towards father, Merck, Bolling, etc. Our arrival must be a surprise to all. I rely upon that. Here nobody suspects anything as yet. G.

WHAT I have thought about our quarters, and what we want, etc., shall all follow in my next letter, as soon as you have written me your ideas.

* Goethe relates in one of his letters to the Frau von Stein (9 Dec. 1777), that on some occasion when he was seriously ill, his mother, opening her Bible at hazard, in search of comfort, came upon this passage, "Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria, they shall plant and pipe also." It is to this that he refers again. The quotation appears to be from Jer. xxi. 5, but it is not accurate.

IV.

[August, 1779.]

SUCH an answer is what I wished from you, dear mother; I hope it will turn out quite beautifully and grandly. Now for more particular news of our coming. About the middle of September we shall arrive, and remain quite quietly with you for a few days. For as the duke does not exactly wish to see his aunts and cousins who will be at the fair, we shall go further, and proceed by boat down the Maine and Rhine. When we have completed our tour, we shall return and fix our quarters *in formâ* with you. I shall then devote myself to all my friends and acquaintances, and the duke will go to Darmstadt and visit some of the nobility in the neighbourhood. Our rooms are settled as follows. A bed shall be made in the small room for the duke, and the organ, if it still stands there, taken out. The large room remains for interviews and the entrée to his room. He sleeps on a clean straw mattress, over which a fine linen sheet is spread under a light counterpane.

(Second side blank, third side.)

The paper blots through, so I go on here.

The chimney-room will be arranged for his servants, with a mattress bed placed in it.

For Herr v. Wedel the back grey-room can be prepared: also a mattress bed, etc.

For me, up stairs in my old sitting-room, also a straw bed like the duke's.

Have dinner at mid-day; four dishes, neither more nor less, no cookery, but your homely art, at its best; whatever fruit you can get in early morning will be good.

Thus we reduce the chance of upsetting every one when first we arrive, and a few days will pass before people are aware of us; at fair-time that is easy.

Take the whole of the lustre out of the duke's room, it would seem absurd to him. The sconces you may leave. Otherwise everything neat as usual, and the less appearance of show the better. It must seem to you as if we had lived thus with you for ten years. For servants upstairs in

the attic with our people, you must provide one or two beds. Put out your silver things for the use of the duke hand-basin, candlestick, etc. He drinks no coffee or the like. Wedel will please you, he is better than any other of us male folks whom you have seen.

Still a strict silence, for nobody here knows a word. Whatever occurs to you further, write to me. I will answer about everything, so that everything may be well prepared. Merck must not know anything yet.*

V.

Weimar, 11 Aug. 1781.

THE "*Devin du Village*" arrived yesterday with Melchior's manuscript. Hitherto time and quiet have been lacking me to answer your last kind letter. To see expressed in it once more, and to read in your own hand your old familiar ways of thinking, has given me great pleasure. I pray you to be easy on my account, and not to let yourself be put out about anything. My health is much better than I could have expected or hoped in former times, and as it is adequate for what it is incumbent on me, in a great part, at least, to do, I have of course every reason to be satisfied with it. As far as my position itself is concerned, it has, notwithstanding great annoyances, also very much that is desirable for me, of which the best proof is, that I cannot think of any other possible to me, to which I would at present transfer myself. For to wish oneself, with hypochondriacal discontent, out of one's own skin into another, will, methinks, not become me. Merck and others judge my situation quite wrongly, they only see what I sacrifice and not what I gain; and they cannot understand that I daily grow richer, whilst I daily give away so much. You remember the last part of the time which I spent with

* On 30 Sept. Goethe writes from Frankfort to the Frau von Stein: "We have arrived here on a most beautiful evening, and have been received with very pleasant faces. I have found my father altered; he is quieter, and his memory is failing: my mother is still in all her old strength and affection. In October the Duke wrote to Frau Goethe from Switzerland to thank her for her good reception of them. (See Keil, *Frau Rath*, Nos. 35, 36.)

you, before I came to this place; continually under such circumstances I should certainly have been ruined. The inadequacy of the narrow and slowly moving middle-class circle, to the breadth and activity of my character, would have driven me mad. With vivid imagination and intuition of human affairs, I should have been still unacquainted with the world, and remained in a perpetual childhood, which chiefly through self-conceit, and all allied faults, becomes unbearable to itself and others. How much happier it was to see myself placed in a relationship to which I was on no side inured, in which I had opportunity enough, through many errors of understanding and hastiness, of learning to know myself and others, in which, abandoned to myself and to fate, I went through so many trials, which may not be necessary to many hundred men, but which were in the highest degree needful for my development. And even now, how could I, in accordance with my mode of existence, wish for myself a happier position than one which for me has something permanent. For if a new capability is developed in me daily, if my ideas have continually grown clearer, my strength increased, my knowledge widened, my discernment corrected itself and my spirit grown more lively; so I have daily found opportunity of applying all these qualities, sometimes in great matters, sometimes in small. You see how far I am removed from the hypochondriacal discontent, which sets so many men at variance with their circumstances; and that only the weightiest considerations, or events quite special and unexpected by me could move me to leave my post; and it would be unanswerable against me if, at the time when the planted trees begin to grow, and we begin to hope at harvest-tide to separate the tares from the wheat, I were to go away through any sort of discontent, and would despoil myself of shadow, fruit, and harvest. In the meantime, believe me that a large share of the good courage, with which I endure and work, springs from the thought that all these sacrifices are voluntary, and that I only need order post-horses to be harnessed, to find with you again the necessaries and pleasures of life with unconstrained rest. For without this prospect, and if I were forced in hours of vexation to consider myself

a bond-servant and day-labourer for necessity's sake, many things would be much bitterer to me. May I continue to hear from you that your cheerfulness does not forsake you in father's present condition.* Continue to procure as much variety for yourself as the social life around you offers. It does not seem probable to me that I shall be able to leave here this autumn, in any case not before the end of September, yet I would try to be with you at vintage-time. Write to me therefore if this is likely to fall earlier on account of the fine summer.

Farewell. Greet my old good friends.

G.

VI.

W. 7 Dec., 1783.

FROM your letter, dear mother, I have seen with much pleasure that you are well and enjoying the pleasures of life as far as possible. You will shortly receive the fourth book of *Meister*, which I recommend strongly to you for the rest of the dramatic amateur matter.

Do not make any commotion on account of the *Iphigenia*, for what is the use of that; but try to clear up the matter, as much as possible, and trace the packet, for it has not arrived here, unless I am very much mistaken, which is indeed possible, with the thousand things I have in my head. As you have a well-written copy, it seems to me dubious. Could you not more nearly fix the time when you received it, and compare with the Düsseldorf postal certificate? In any case it will do no harm to bring the matter mildly before the post-office and have it made clear.

Frau Betty † has moreover acted against all manners, against all motherly feeling, in spoiling even one moment for you by such idle gossip as is the news about me. You have never known me with a swollen head and stomach, and that one should be serious about serious things is also natural, especially when one is thoughtful by nature, and wishes good and truth in the world.

If in the bad winter of '69 it could have been pointed

* Rath Goethe died in May of the following year at the age of 72.

† Betti Jacobi, who had spread a report about the supposed bad condition of Goethe's health. KEIL.

out to you beforehand in a looking-glass, that again in such a manner vineyards should be planted and piped in on the hills of Samaria,* with what joy would you have received it!

Let us gracefully accept these years as a gift, as we in general have to regard our whole life, and acknowledge gratefully every year that is added to it.

I am well, according to my constitution; can superintend my affairs, enjoy intercourse with good friends, and still keep time and strength for this and that favourite occupation. I cannot imagine or devise a better place for myself, for now I know the world, and it is not hidden to me how it looks behind the hills. You, on your side, take pleasure in my existence now, and even if I should leave the world before you. I have not brought shame on you; I leave good friends and a good name behind me; and so it can be your best consolation that I do not altogether die.

In the meantime live peacefully; perhaps fate will yet give us a pleasant old age together, which we will then live through with gratitude.

Forgive Seidel † for not writing; since his return he has found much to do. I will admonish Wieland and Fräul. Jöckh.‡ I do not know whether I have already written to you that I have the son of the Master-of-the-Horse von Stein, and of my dearest friend,§ with me, a very good handsome boy of ten years old, who gives me many a pleasant hour, and enlivens my quietude and seriousness. He has been with me to the Harz.

I send you herewith a parcel of *Tiefurt Journals*. It was begun as a weekly paper, for amusement, when the Dowager Duchess was living in Tiefurt a year ago, and has been continued since that time. There are some very good things in it, well worth your looking through.

* See note, p. 289.

† Philipp Seidel, his servant and secretary, who had accompanied him from Frankfort.

‡ Fräulein von Göckhausen, one of the dowager duchess's suite.

§ Friedrich von Stein, born 1773. He lived two years in Goethe's house, and accompanied him several times on short journeys or tours.

When you have had enough of it, send it on to Zürich to Frau Schulthes,* as well as the fourth book of W. Meister.

Fare right well, and love me. Of Stieben we know nothing. G.

VII.

W. 3 October, 1785.

You have showed me much kindness, dear mother, this year, for which I heartily thank you. Your kind reception of dear Fritz,† and your care of him, makes me happy, like anything which happens quite specially to please me. You will find that he is a dear child, and his accounts now give me great pleasure. If people wish, like the Swedenborgian spirits, to see through other eyes, they would do best to choose the eyes of a child. He has arrived well and happy with Herr von Niebecker.

Thank all friends for me. I am writing to Riese‡ myself. Fare right well; soon I will send you something funny. What effect have the "Brother and Sister"§ had?

G.

VIII.‖

4 Rome, Nov. 1786.

Before everything else I must tell you, dear mother, that I have arrived here safe and sound. My journey, which I undertook quite privately, has given me much pleasure. I came here through Bavaria, across the Tyrol, to Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Venice, Ferrara, Bologna, and Florence, quite alone and unrecognised; here also I observe a kind of incognito.

How pleasant it is to me to realize so many dreams and wishes of my life, to see in reality the objects I have seen in engravings from my childhood upwards, and of which I have so often heard father speak, I cannot express to you.

* See note, p. 260.

† Friedrich von Stein.

‡ See notes pp. 4 and 316.

§ Goethe's drama *Die Geschwister*.

‖ Printed by Frese. Goethe had left Karlsbad on 3rd Sept., for his long projected visit to Italy. He arrived at Rome on 29 October. This is the only letter to his mother from Italy, where he stayed about 18 months.

All these things I am seeing indeed rather late, but with all the more advantage, and much in a short time.

How long I shall remain I do not know yet, it will depend on how it looks at home. In any case I shall return by Switzerland and visit you. Then we will have a good treat, but that is all between ourselves.

I have not time to say much to-day, only I wished that you should soon share my joy. I shall come back a new man, and live to the greater joy of myself and my friends.

Send the enclosed letter to the Bethmanns,* without their absolutely knowing that the letter has gone through you. The Bethmanns have given me credit under a strange name, without knowing it themselves.

Write to me soon and fully, how you are and any other news; in a foreign land everything about friends and loved ones is interesting.

Also say when this letter arrives, that I may guide myself accordingly. Farewell, and love me.

G.

IX.

Weimar, 24 Dec. 1792.

THE hope of soon seeing you, dear mother, and my worthy Frankfort friends again, has now quite vanished from me, for circumstances compelled me to return from Düsseldorf to Weimar, by Paderborn and Cassel.†

How much anxiety I have had about you hitherto! How much have I deplored the position in which my countrymen find themselves! How much have I wondered at their behaviour under such critical circumstances! Certainly nothing could have been more flattering to me than the question whether I could decide to accept a place as councillor if I were chosen by lot, which has this moment

* The well-known Frankfort merchants.

† He had just returned from the unfortunate campaign in France, his account of which is well-known. In it he mentions (see the translation, pp. 173–6) a letter from his mother, offering him on behalf of the municipality of Frankfort the post of councillor for which the death of his uncle Textor rendered him eligible; to which offer this is the answer.

reached me; for in the sight of Europe, nay, the whole world, it is an honour to be born a citizen of Frankfort.

The friends of my youth, whom I have ever had so much reason to value, could give me no finer proof of their lasting remembrance than holding me worthy, in this important epoch, to take part in the administration of the commonwealth.

Your letter, which I received amidst the tumult of war, cheered up the sad hours I had to live through, and I could, under the circumstances, seize on the hope of seeing my beloved fatherland again in a short time.

It was then my intention to offer verbally my thanks for the honour proposed to me, but at the same time to explain circumstantially and frankly the position in which I at present find myself.

With the irresistible preference which every right-thinking person feels for his fatherland, it would be a painful renunciation to me to decline a position which every citizen assumes with joy, and ought to assume in present times especially, were not on the other hand my actual circumstances so happy, and, I may well say, favourable beyond my deserts. His serene highness the duke has treated me for so many years with marked favour, I am so much indebted to him, that it would be the grossest ingratitude were I to leave my post at the moment in which the state most needs true servants.

I beg you also to thank most warmly the worthy men who show me such friendly feelings, assure them of my most sincere gratitude, and try to retain for me their confidence in the future.*

As soon as circumstances in some measure allow it, I will satisfy the feelings of my heart, and verbally and in detail, declare what can only be put superficially in this letter. May everything which makes my worthy fellow-

* It may be noted here that Goethe's formal relations with his native city did not remain very cordial. At a later period his name was expunged from the list of Burghers on account of some dispute connected with an unsettled claim for municipal dues, and when, eventually, the authorities proposed to reinstate him, he stiffly declined to avail himself of the privilege. See his correspondence with the Willemers, under date 22 Oct. 1829.

countrymen at present anxious be far removed, and peace, so much to be desired by us all, again appear. Farewell.

G.

X.

Weimar, 1 February, 1801.

THIS time, dear mother, I write to you with my own hand, that you may convince yourself, that I am going on again quite tolerably.

The illness did not indeed take me unawares, for some time before I had not been quite as I ought. Had I, in the preceding year, used a bath, as I did in earlier times, perhaps I should have got over it more easily; yet as then I had nothing really to complain of, the most skilful physicians did not know what to advise me precisely, and I allowed myself to be detained from a journey to Pyrmont, to which they wished to induce me, through considerations of convenience, business and economy; and so the decision of a crisis was left to chance. Finally, after various symptoms of catarrh, at the end of the preceding year, the evil broke out, and I remember little of the dangerous nine days and nights of which you have already had intelligence.

As soon as I recovered myself again, the affair rapidly went on better; I already find myself tolerably well as regards physical strength, and as to the mental it also seems likely soon to be again what it formerly was.

It is remarkable that a similar sickness has shown itself this month, partly in our neighbourhood, partly at some distance.

How good, careful and loving my little one has shown herself on this occasion you can imagine, I cannot sufficiently praise her unwearied activity. Augustus has also behaved very well, and both give me much joy on my return into life.*

The sympathy in my illness which was also shown me by his serene highness the Duke, the royal family, the town and neighbourhood, was very consoling to me. At least I can flatter myself that people give me a little

* He refers to his wife and son. The latter was now eleven years old.

affection and that some significance is ascribed to my existence.

Thus we will make the best of this too and see how we may by-and-by knit up again the threads of life.

I hope that you will get through this winter very well and cheerfully, and as I am neither prevented from seeing company nor from occupying myself, I hope to spend the few gloomy months not without profit and pleasure.

Here is the advertisement of Tancred. I had finished it shortly before my illness. Greet all friends.

G.

XI.

W. 6th May, 1805.

ACCEPT, dear mother, a thousand thanks for all the goodness you have shown our Augustus. I wish that the memory of his presence could only give you a part of the joy his account now gives us. We are vividly transplanted by it among you and my old friends. Thank all heartily who have received him so kindly. This first experiment in seeing the world has succeeded so well with him that I have good hope for his future. His youth was happy, and I wish that he may pass on into a more serious age also gay and happy. His description of your continued well-being and good health gives us the greatest pleasure; he has often to repeat it. With more exercise in this finer weather I find myself very well.* We greet all, most warmly, most gratefully.

G.

* Goethe was at this time by no means well. This letter was written two days before Schiller's death.

Of the person to whom the following letters are addressed nothing more is known than here appears. Schöll, by whom the letters were published, was ignorant of his real name. The only reference made by Goethe to the affair is in his diary (*Tag und Jahreshefte*) as follows: "A strange man, impoverished by involved destinies, not without some blame attaching to himself, maintained himself at Ilmenau with my assistance, under a feigned name. He was very useful to me, inasmuch as, being a clever, although hypochondriacal, man of business, he reported to me from personal inspection, a good deal in respect to mining and revenue matters which I should not myself have been able to appreciate and make my own to the same extent." See *Autobiog.* trans. ii. 205. He died before 1785, as we find from a letter written by Goethe in that year. See *Works* (Ed. Hempel.) xxvii. p. 379.

LETTERS TO "HERR KRAFT."

I.

Nov. 2nd, 1778.*

To a man, struggling against the waves, the cruellest blow is when the willing hand on land lacks sufficient strength to rescue all whom the storm may drive towards his shores. When he—to whom a human life would be the richest yield of salvage-right—has to content himself with a little and behold the others perish.

I think, that I am not mistaken in the idea of you which I derive from your letters, and it accordingly grieves me all the more, to be unable to afford either help or hope to a man whose demands are so moderate.

Near this pool, which an angel but seldom stirs, hundreds linger for years; a few only can be healed, and I am not the man who in the meantime can exclaim, "Arise, and walk."

Accept the little which I can give you, as a plank thrown out to you for the moment to gain time.

Remain for the present season where you are, and in the future I am willing to arrange for some little assistance. Let me know when you receive the money, and how far you think it will go.

Should you want a coat, an overcoat, boots or warm stockings, let me know, for I have some to spare.

Accept these drops of balm from the travelling medicine-chest of the willing Samaritan in the spirit in which I give them.

* The letter was addressed to the town of Gera, in the principality of Reuss.

II.

Nov. 11th, 1778.

In this packet you will receive an overcoat, boots and stockings, along with some money. My plan for you this winter is as follows:

In Jena living is cheap. I shall make inquiries for apartments, board, etc., as suitable as possible to a person enjoying a limited income, I shall say, and wishing to live retired.

When that has been done, I shall write and tell you, and then you set out, take possession, whilst I further shall send linen, food, and money for a coat which you can have made; to the rector I shall say that you have been recommended to me, that you wished to live quietly for a certain time at the university, and would have your name entered.

Then you will have to invent some kind of story. At all events you must retain the title of secretary, etc., have your name entered: and then no one, either burgomaster or bailiff, will trouble themselves more about you. On this account I have not sent you one of my own coats, as it might be recognized in Jena. Write to let me know how you like my idea, or at all events in what character you intend to present yourself.

G

P.S. Through an oversight the parcel has been left behind, but the letter can still be forwarded.

I beg you accordingly to answer me on the foregoing before I send the packet. It would perhaps be better if at Jena you went at once to an hotel. At such a place you need fear nothing.

Try to regain a footing in this world; we only live once! I myself know to the fullest extent what that means: "in addition to all other burdens, to hang round one's neck the fate of another human being,"—but you shall not perish.

I leave it to your own judgment. You might remain in Gera until all has been arranged in Jena. *That I believe to be the best plan;* and so remain quietly in Gera. [But

if anything should prevent this, then] go straight to Jena, to an hotel, and let me hear from there.

G.

III.

Nov. 23rd, 1778.

To-day, the 23rd, I have received together your letters of the 17th and 18th of November, and have already so far anticipated their contents, that I have made most detailed inquiries in respect to any one who might be recommended to me, as wishing to live modestly and quietly in Jena under the protection of the University.

Until the answer comes, remain quietly in Gera; the day after to-morrow I shall send you a parcel, and tell you something more.

You are no burden to me; on the contrary, you teach me how to economize, for I waste a good deal of my income, which I might as well save for the benefit of the needy. And do you actually think that your tears and your blessing are nothing? He who has, cannot bless, he must give: yet if the great and the rich of this world distribute wealth and honours, fate, as a counterbalance, has reserved for the poor the privilege of blessing, which the happy know not how to covet.

Perhaps soon an opportunity may occur when you may prove useful to me; for not the maker of plans and promises, but rather he who offers faithful service in small matters is most welcome to one who would so gladly achieve what is good and lasting.

Do not hate poor philanthropists with their stipulations and precautions; with so many adverse experiences, one must pray diligently in order to receive again youthful good will, courage, and light-heartedness, the ingredients of happiness. And it is rather a blessing sent by God, seeing how seldom one can do anything, when he bids us help a really unfortunate man.

Remain undisturbed until you hear again from me; do not meddle with Altenburg; if anything else occurs write to me. Your letters are of very old date. Write as soon as this arrives; I send it away the 23rd of November, '78.

G.

IV.

Dec. 14th, 1778.

YOUR letter of Dec. 7th I have received early this morning, Friday the 11th.

And firstly to quiet you, I must tell you, that you shall not be coerced in any way; you shall receive the hundred thalers wherever you may chance to be; but now, listen to me.

I know that his own ideas are realities to a man, and although the picture, which you draw of Jena is a false one, still I also know that nothing can be less easily reasoned away than such a morbid anxiety. Jena, for many reasons, I deemed to be the best place for you to reside in. The university and the town have long lost their former character for extravagance and wildness; the students are not worse than anywhere else, and many of them are very reputable people. They are accustomed to the coming and going of so many persons, that a single individual is not exposed to remark.

A great many live poorly enough there, so that poverty is no stigma and cause of contempt. Yet withal it is a town where the necessaries of life can be procured.

How wretched it would be to be ill during winter in the country without assistance! The people, moreover, to whom I mentioned you, are respectable householders, who also for my sake would receive you well. Whatever happened to you, I should always be able to assist you by one person or another. Thus, at any rate, your lodging would be safe. I could be of assistance to you in settling down there; I should only have to answer for board and lodging at present and not pay till afterwards.

I should have given you a trifle at the beginning of the year, and done the rest on credit. You would have been nearer to me. Every market-day I could send you something, occasionally wine, victuals, utensils which would cost me nothing more, and might make your life more endurable; you would have been more closely connected with my domestic arrangements. How full of difficulty is communication with Gera! * Nothing ever comes to

* Gera is forty miles or more from Weimar, and not like Jena, within the Duchy of Saxe Weimar.

hand in due time, and, moreover costs money that does good to nobody. You might have stayed probably half a year in Jena before anyone would have noticed you. For these reasons I preferred Jena, as indeed you would do yourself, if you looked on the matter with an unprejudiced eye. What if you made a trial? Yet I know that a fly may cause a man of weak nerves to falter, and that no argument avails against it.

Think over it and you would lighten the matter both to me and yourself. I promise that you shall be well settled in Jena. Yet if you cannot bring yourself to take the step, then remain in Gera. At new-year you shall receive twenty thalers and the same amount in advance every quarter at Easter, Mid-summer and Michaelmas. I cannot make any other arrangement. As, in my position it is so easy to obtain money, I must be all the more strict in my management.

Even that which I hitherto have sent you—having come at the end of the year and unexpectedly—has made a hole which I must make good again. Write and tell me how much it was? I have failed to note down one remittance by post, and find a hitch in my accounts.

If you were in Jena, I might also more easily procure a commission, or perhaps some employment; make your personal acquaintance, and so forth.

Yet act entirely according to your own feelings, and if my arguments fail to touch your feelings, and with conviction do not promise rest and revived courage in Jena, then remain in your present state of rest. Begin soon to narrate your life, and send it to me in instalments, and remain convinced that I approve of everything that can quiet and content you, and that I only chose Jena, because there I hoped most easily and conveniently to myself to be able to procure you the most endurable existence.

G.

V.

3rd Jan. 1779.

HEREWITH are five louis d'or. Meanwhile I beg you to have patience; if I can do more for you, I will do it gladly. I await the continuation of your life; thank you for your confidence. G.

VI.

26th March, 1779.

THIS month I have been but little at home, and now at last find your memoir. I have not forgotten your wants. I have been looking out a residence for you in Ilmenau, and there you could get what is needful for 100 dollars, which I would guarantee from quarter to quarter, and would also find a small sum for pocket-money. Only I must distinctly repeat, that I can give you no hope of any *good* employment; if you could assist me in duties of management, which I have in that neighbourhood, I should be in a condition to pay you a trifle for it, which would be a help and a beginning. Perhaps it would lead to something further. Your lodgings would be at a tradesman's house, but you would board out with some other honest and kind people. Everybody would receive you kindly, and it would at least be one step nearer. For in lottery business there is little to be looked for here with us. I also confess to you, that the little you receive from me I would wish to be spent in the duke's dominions, since from there I take it.

Herewith I send you the Easter-quarter, but indeed I see well that by this time you will again be in debt, and that it will at most suffice for the journey.

Make up your mind soon. My proposal at least will bring you nearer to a settled state, if it will not afford you any further prospects; outward respect, and assistance in illness will not be wanting to you. We hope that the mining work may be taken up again, and perhaps it will also afford some work for you. And in that case, in order to have a chance of being recommended, it is necessary for you to have been some time in the country. Answer me soon, get information yourself about the road. Afterwards you shall hear details from me.

Your essay about lotteries is very good, and shows your insight and good intentions.

Let me recommend you patience, since you are convinced that I will gladly do what is possible for you.

G.

VII.

22nd May, 1779.*

I BEG you to be economical with the little money I am able to send. At the end of June, I shall forthwith send the money for board and lodging, and some more besides. I trust you may find life endurable yonder among the mountains. I shall also send books, only—as I myself have to borrow them all, I should beg to have them sent back soon and regularly. I have told the messenger to ask every time whether you have anything for me. I shall mention you directly to the new bailiff, who is going thither. Captain Castrop knows nothing more of you than the rest, and nothing whatever of your relations with me. I only said to him, that your money passed through my hands, and thus I could answer for your board and lodging. He is a pleasant and obliging man, and will very soon call on you. He is a Captain of artillery and engineers, and as I am entrusted with the military and public roads department, in him I have a diligent and worthy assistant. When you are settled write down a few more anecdotes of your own life, describe in detail what you have noticed in different countries, it will be a diversion and will amuse me. Young Dr. Scharf is an able medical man, perhaps it would not be bad, if you were sometimes to consult him; if you wish it I will also give you an introduction to him.

G.

VIII.

12th June, 1779.

THANK you for what you have sent, in a week's time you shall receive some pocket-money, and I will see to the payment of your hosts.

The books for you I unfortunately forgot by reason of the many things which fill my head; still to-day I will take care to send a portion. Go on with your notes, and

* This and subsequent letters were addressed to Ilmenau in the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar. The reopening of the mines there, which had been closed since 1739, was a project of the Duke's and Goethe's, which had been accomplished with the aid of some Saxon officials and work-people in the year 1784.

write to me too, about anything else you may notice up there. G.

IX.

23rd June, 1779.

I HAVE duly and safely received your letter with news from Ilmenau, and thank you very much. Continue to tell me about everything, if one may not help at once and effectively, still one frequently obtains ideas. To-morrow Captain Castrop will leave here. I shall give him some money for you, for I have already told him that you receive your money through me. He is first to settle accounts with your hosts, conclude a kind of contract, and I shall then bind myself to pay the people every quarter.

Herewith is some paper and sealing wax.

X.

13th July, 1779.

I AM very glad that Castrop has settled the contract in this way, and that henceforth you have only to deal with Hoes. These people ask 100 dollars a year, and I will guarantee them 25 dollars every quarter, and also take care that from the end of July you receive a certain allowance. What I can send you *in natura* as paper, pens, sealing-wax, etc., I shall also forward; in the mean time here are some books, which I must beg to have returned as stated.

Thank you for your news, pray continue. The desire to do good is a bold and proud desire; we must be very thankful if only a small part of it is granted us.

Now I have a plan. When you are in your new quarters I should wish you to devote some attention to a boy,* for whose education I have to provide, and who is learning wood-craft at Ilmenau. He has begun French; would you help him on in it? He draws well, if you would keep him to it. I would fix the times, when he should come to you; you would free me from much anxiety, which I often feel on his account, if you would find out in friendly conversation and would give me an account of

* Peter Imbaumgarten. See above, p. 288.

his disposition, and would keep an eye on his progress. All depends on whether you happen to like that sort of occupation. As far as I am concerned the society of children makes me happy and youthful. If you will answer me on this matter, I will give you more detailed directions. You would render me a material service, and I could remit to you monthly something of what is put aside for the boy's education.

I only wish I were able to lighten by degrees your melancholy condition, and make you constantly cheerful.

P.S. I have safely received the news about Erfurt, as also the other parcels with seals unbroken.

I send here a contract *in duplo*, which you can exchange with Rieth.* Thus for the next year you would be secured against extreme want, and I beg you to be as far as possible at ease, and convince yourself that I shall by degrees do what I can for you. The contract, to which I have affixed my guarantee, you will have to sign at the place where the + in pencil stands and then hand it to Ried (Rieth).

Your letter was duly delivered to me yesterday.

G.

XI.

3rd Aug., 1779.

Do not be concerned if you do not always hear from me. The messenger has safely delivered both packet and letter of the 2nd of Aug.

I shall never change my disposition or my conduct towards you, and I hope the same on your part. Retain your frankness, and write to me about everything that may befall you, without fear of offending me.

Here are the literary journals (*Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliotek*), and six thalers in cash. The next time you shall have cloth for a suit; also anything else necessary before the winter; perhaps I am coming myself over to Ilmenau, where we could speak further together. In respect to Rieth I shall see what circumstances allow me to do. Otherwise in such cases I do not readily recommend exceptions.

* The man with whom he lodged.

Concerning the boy I will write more circumstantially as soon as possible.

Herewith you will also receive linen for half-a-dozen shirts. G.

(*On the back of the letter.*)

A young man of the name of Seidel,* who manages my household, will call and arrange with you what is needful concerning young Peter im Baumgarten, and in fact settle all else, for it takes too long to write it.

XII.

9th Sept. 1779.

I THANK you very much for what you are doing for Peter, for I am interested in the youth; he is a legacy of the unfortunate Lindau, only pay a little quiet attention to him. See how you can interest him! Whether he reads, whether he practises French, draws, etc., is all one to me, if he only for the time does something, and I hear about him—how you find him, and what you think about him. For the present let him look on wood-craft as his first and last vocation, and hear from himself how he likes the idea, what pleases him, and what does not, and so forth. For, believe me, man must have a *trade* to support him.

The artist is never paid, but only the artisan. Chodowiecki the artist whom we admire, may eat crumbs, but Chodowiecki the artisan, who illuminates with his copper-plates the most wretched daubs, is paid. Do not imagine that Peter is endowed with the patience and perseverance for an artist; now that he is destined for the forest he wishes to draw, he would soon evince a longing for the wood if he were meant for the easel.

I am leaving here for a few weeks,† and send a little money. Castrop has instructions to pay the twenty-five thalers to the Rieths.

When I return you will hear from me.

G.

* His confidential amanuensis and servant, formerly in the household of Goethe's father in Frankfort.

† This refers to a visit in company with Duke of Weimar and Von Wedel to Cassel, Frankfort, and Switzerland, from which they returned on January 13, the date of the next letter.

XIII.

Weimar, 13th Jan. 1780.

WE have all returned safe, well, and happy. I have duly received your packets at Frankfurt, and thank you very much. By your attention to these things, and your trouble on Peter's behalf, you render me a real service, and repay abundantly all that I may have done for you. Do not be anxious about the future; occasions will certainly occur, when you can be of use; in the meantime go on as before.

I shall send to Ried the last quarter's money immediately and to you whatever you may owe in addition—let me know how much—and a little pocket money for the present. I will also remember Peter. Only so much this time in haste.

G.

I HAVE received your letter and will attend to what is necessary; remain at ease. I shall send some money directly, and write more.

G.

THE letter has been left behind, and I have decided to send the money at once. I am sorry for your landlord. Frau Ried will receive herewith the last quarter. For yourself I send also twenty-five thalers, to pay your debts and assist you further. As soon as possible, when the weather becomes finer, I shall send a carriage to fetch you, if I do not come myself. In respect to Peter I am writing to Herr von Staff. Continue to do for him all in your power.

Pay without more ado the fine for that wretched affair; I would rather give you the money for it, than that you should apply for its remission. It would only make the matter public again, and I should not like the duke to get to see your name on such an occasion. Only pay, and write to me what it comes to.

XIV.

[Weimar], 10 Feb. 1780.

I HAVE so much to do, and can only say, that I beg you to reassure yourself.

You have the fault of an over-anxious disposition, and that your ever active imagination is always connecting one thing with another, and is wont to see everywhere catastrophe, ruin, and the end of all things. As long as the bailiff acts honestly he has nothing to fear. We shall have to wait to see what further turn things take. Do not meddle further in anything, and remain quietly at your place.

G.

XV.

11th Aug. 1780.

I THANK you for your solicitude for my health; I also beg you to be at ease about it, for by no amount of anxiety can we keep a man among the living. Accustomed every day to do what circumstances require, what my intuition, capacities and strength permit, I am unconcerned as to how long it may last, and diligently call to mind the sage, who declared that even three well-employed hours were quite sufficient.

As to yourself I shall put down your name among those whose maintenance after my death I bequeath to my friends.

G.

XVI.

6th Dec. 1780.

THE bailiff ought not to allow himself to be so disturbed by every sudden alarm, but continue to do his duty.

I should like to see such a scheme as would aid the collection of taxes.

Thank you for the extracts; it is a long and a difficult piece of work.

XVII.

11th January, 1781.

I THANK you very much for all you have sent me through Bernstein*; continue to write about these matters with your accustomed frankness. As concerns yourself, I believe I shall completely set you at rest by

* The well-known surgeon.—SCHÖLL.

offering you for this year altogether two hundred thalers. Every quarter you shall receive fifty; but then they will serve you for everything. So much I can spare; you will have no need to be anxious about every trifle, and can divide them as you like. I have already given orders about it to my man Seidel. Farewell, and let me soon hear that your ailments have altogether left you.

G.

XVIII.

31st Jan. 1781.

You have done well in disclosing to me the whole condition of your mind; I am certainly doing all I can, little as I am in a condition to do anything, to set you completely at rest. My circumstances,—beyond which I cannot go if at the end of the year I do not wish myself to be under obligations to others, which would scarcely be compatible with my position—do not allow me to give you anything whatever beyond the 200 thalers. These you shall duly receive; with these endeavour to get on, and to procure for yourself by degrees everything that is necessary.

I expressly stipulate that, without my knowledge and consent, you do not change your present quarters or place of residence. Every man has his duty, make this the duty of your love towards me, and it will become easy to you.

It would be very displeasing to me, if you were to borrow from any one; it is just this unhappy discontent which now tortures you, that has been the bane of your whole life, and you have never been any more contented with 1000 thalers than you are now with 200, because there has always been something more for you to wish for, and you have never accustomed yourself to restrain your mind within the bounds of necessity. I do not reproach you for this, I know, alas too well, how it is natural to you, and feel how the dissimilarity between your present and your past condition must needs cause you suffering. But enough; one word will do for a thousand. At the end of every quarter, you will receive your fifty thalers, for the present Seidel shall give you something in advance. You must then retrench; "must" is hard,

but by "must" alone can man show what his inward condition is. Any one can live unrestrainedly.

Let me know the first proceedings of the government against the bailiff in the tax-business.

G.

XIX.

11th Feb., 1781.

If you will look at my last letter once more without prejudice you will be able to see clearly, that you have wrongly interpreted it. You have neither *sunk in my esteem*, nor have I a *bad idea* of you, nor have I given up my *good opinion*, nor finally has your disposition acquired, a blemish in my sight; all these are exaggerated expressions, which a sensible man ought not to allow himself. To speak my thoughts *frankly*, and to wish that certain traits in your mode of thinking and acting were different, is that the same as to consider you a *bad man*, and to annul our previous relation?

It is just this morbid, feeble tendency of mind now transgressing all bounds, which again inspired you with your last letter, that I blame and lament. Is it proper, to tell me that *I ought to command in what tone your future letters are to be written?* Do we ever command such a thing to any honourable and sensible man? Is it civil of you on this occasion to *underline* the words, that you eat *my bread?* Is it becoming of any right-thinking man, if we gently blame him for anything, or call him, from one point of view, unhealthy, to fly out directly, or to act as if the house were coming down about his head.

Do not take it ill of me, that I should wish to know that you were happy and contented with that, little it is true, which I can do for you.

So, if you wish it, let all remain as at first; I, at any rate, shall change nothing in my conduct towards you.

As regards the plan, which the bailiff has to send in in the tax-business, he need only draw it up in *honesty*, yet with the prudence which his situation requires. Particularly with respect to perfectly definite and efficient proposals for the future; the remainder will follow as a matter of course.

G.

XX.

3 Sept. 1783.*

WHEN I arrive in Weimar I will send the money. For the rest, I beg you to set yourself at ease, for it is better for your own mental condition, that you should live retired. You have already rendered me services, and future opportunities will not fail to occur. I have no favours to bestow, and my goodwill is not so changeable. Farewell, and enjoy the little in peace.

G.

* This letter alone has the address to Herr Kraft, which was probably an assumed name.

THE friend to whom the two following letters were written is the same Johann Jacob Riese to whom three of the earliest letters in this volume (Nos. 3–5) are addressed. He held the office of *Kastenschreiber* in the municipality of Frankfort, his duties being somewhat similar to those of a vestry clerk and "guardian of the poor" in a large English parish. Amongst them was the regulation of burials, to which Goethe pleasantly refers in the second letter. The only passage in which he is mentioned by name in the 'Autobiography,' is in book xii.; see translation, vol. i. p. 438.

These and the three former letters are all that remain of Goethe's correspondence with Riese, at whose death many other letters were destroyed.—ED.

LETTERS TO J. J. RIESE.

I.

Weimar, 14 July, '83.

SINCE I received by the courier, my dear Riese, your answer that you would have the kindness to interest yourself about a good little person who is in trouble, I have been unable to write anything further on the matter. She has fallen ill, and it was not possible to send her any further.

Let me know, however, whether in the meanwhile you happen to have bespoken a lodging. It would be best if she could be placed with some good people where board and service would be found, so that those who are about her at present could be discharged straightway. For the sake of economy and for other reasons it would be well. Farewell and receive my best thanks for your friendly obligingness.*

G.

II.

Weimar, 14 Feb. 1814.

MY son's accounts, accompanied by that kindly written by your own hand, have carried me back to those times, as peaceful as they were innocent, when we enjoyed a bright and merry youth. I am glad that you, as a friend

* The "person" to whom this letter refers was a young woman, either French or English, with whom Prince Constantine, the Duke of Weimar's younger brother, had formed an unfortunate connection. She had come to Weimar in the beginning of 1783, and Goethe was desired by the Ducal family to provide for her return to her own country. All that is known of the affair is summarised in the *Mittheilungen des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthumskunde* in *Frankfurt-a.-M.*, No. 2, 1858, where these two letters are given.

especially dear, are amongst those that are left, and that we can still, to this day, enjoy the past together.* In my third volume you will find your esteemed name and the remembrance of our more intimate relations, not without mention of the constant contradiction with which my friend managed to moderate my enthusiasm and to exercise my dialectic.

Moreover, I took the opportunity of my son's lively account to point out the scar on the first finger of my right hand, which was made by you when, somewhat mischievously, I was pointing out, in an arbour at the Forest-house,† a young lady approaching for whom we both had an inclination. We had just been getting a plate of ham ready to eat, and you had in your hand the raised knife which came down rather quickly to my cost.

Such playful trifling wounds as these life, as it advances with more and more seriousness, does not inflict; and I wish you the good fortune that mid such mutability of affairs you, as a single man subject to few cares, may remain in your place undisturbed. Give my best greetings to our Fränzchen,‡ who I am sure keeps her high spirits. So steady a friendship indicates genuine honest hearts and a peaceful even path in life.

May you still, in your official duties in the churchyard, long continue to dispense epitaphs on this one and that,§ and live in the best health to the comfort and joy of yourself and your surroundings, and continue, too, to think in love of me. Heartily yours,

G.

* Goethe was now 64 years old, and his son, aged 24, had just finished his studies at Heidelberg, and had been visiting friends at Frankfort. His grandmother was no longer living; she died 13 Sept 1808.

† The *Försthaus* is a place of resort in the neighbourhood of Frankfort.

‡ Franziska Crespel, whose family and Goethe's were intimate. See Letter 36, *above*, and *note* pp. 70, 71.

§ See note, p. 316.

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